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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE SUSPECTED MAN.]

ALEXINA.

CHAPTER III.

Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this heathen courtesy.

Shakespeare.

WHEN the Lady Lorean and Lord Ashcroft descended to the drawing-room, announced by a pompous-looking servant, they were received by Lord and Lady Egremont with the greatest cordiality, and welcomed anew to Egremont.

"Lady Alexina, allow me to introduce you to Lord Ashcroft, the son of your father's dearest friend," said the earl, formally.

A faint murmur fell upon Lord Ashcroft's ear, and, subduing the fluttering of his heart, he summoned courage to raise his eyes and gaze upon his unknown betrothed.

She was standing in the full blaze of the chandelier, dressed in garnet silk that fell in heavy folds behind her, trailing upon the carpet, her eyes glowing under her arched brows, and her dark hair wreathed with red geraniums, seeming to the bewildered Lord Ashcroft like the embodiment of the light and fragrance that filled the apartment.

There was nothing timid or retiring in her manner as she stood there, playing with a jewelled fan. No queen ever appeared before her subjects with more royal self-possession than the heiress of Egremont did before her guests.

Lord Ashcroft bowed low before her, and with queenly graciousness the Lady Alexina extended one of her white hands, allowing him to clasp it for a second with something of a lover's warmth.

An introduction between the Lady Lorean and Alexina followed, and as they exchanged a few sentences Lord Ashcroft found opportunity to regard the maiden more closely.

She did not come up to his ideal.

There was nothing tender or amiable about her, nothing sweet and clinging, and the idol of his

dreams had possessed all these qualities, with an ineffable grace that might only be compared to the fragrance of flowers.

But he did not feel much disappointed.

This beautiful, imperious girl aroused his intense admiration, and he even felt a thrill of pride in believing that her haughty will might bend to his, and that to him she might become the tender, clinging being he had loved to picture.

His thoughts were put to flight by the keen and quiet glance he suddenly encountered from the eyes of the heiress, and he knew that she had been scrutinizing him as narrowly and as thoroughly. He wondered what her opinion of him could be.

It could not be otherwise than favourable, although he was too modest to confess so much to himself.

In full dinner dress, as he was, his elegant form was set off to the best advantage, and his spirited face, wearing the faintest trace of anxiety, had never looked nobler or more commanding.

A conversation upon the commonest topics of the day soon became general, and Alexina's condescending air, and Lord Ashcroft's deferential manner, delighted Lord Egremont, for he read in them the favourable impression each had made upon the other.

"And there is everything in first impressions!" thought the earl.

Lord Ashcroft was very fastidious in his tastes, but as yet he saw nothing in his betrothed that he could wish to change. He admired intellectual women, those who were versed in literature, and could converse on subjects beyond the small talk of the day. He had pictured his future wife as one in all respects worthy to be his companion and counsellor, one who could understand and share his highest aspirations, who would like his favourite books, and admire his favourite passages in them; one, in short, his equal in mental resources, while her heart should not have been left uncultivated.

He had no idea that he would be asking too much in desiring this—the Lady Lorean having told him that such women existed—although, to speak truthfully, her ladyship was not gifted with the exquisite gentleness which he admired.

It was impossible, however, in a general conversation upon unimportant subjects to judge of Alexina's mental calibre, and his lordship fondly trusted that it would equal the beauty of her person and the tenderness of her heart, the earl having assured him upon the latter point.

But a few minutes passed when a young gentleman sauntered into the room, and was introduced to her guests by Lady Egremont as her nephew, Lyle Indor.

Directly after the introduction dinner was announced, and Lord Egremont gave his arm to Lady Lorean; Lord Ashcroft offered the same courtesy to his betrothed, and Lady Egremont laid her fingers lightly upon the arm of her nephew.

Then they passed to the dining-room.

This was an apartment in keeping with the magnificence prevailing at Egremont.

An immense fireplace took up one end of the room, and in it several huge logs blazed merrily as in baronial halls in olden time. The windows were arched, and contained in their centres a rose pattern formed in stained glass, through which the light glittered in ruddy waves, imparting a cheerful glow to the costly furniture and the table. The walls were panelled and adorned with suitable pictures, painted upon the wood by artists of talent, and the moss-green carpet was sprinkled with oak-leaves, that lay as carelessly as though they had fallen there from an over-full basket.

The table, bathed in the ruddy glow of the window and fire-light, glittering with crystal and sparkling with silver, abounding with a profusion of Sevres porcelain—the rare painting upon which tempted one to forget the dainties heaped upon them—presented a picture no less worthy of admiration than the panelled walls.

The repast was worthy of its surroundings, and the hour passed swiftly in pleasant converse, the earl carrying out in his character of host his appearance of a "fine old English gentleman," and Lady Egremont, by the exercise of a rare tact, placing her guests entirely at their ease.

The dinner over the ladies retired to the draw-



ing-room, the gentlemen lingering in the dining-room but a short time.

Lord Ashcroft would have liked to withdraw with his betrothed to one of the deep window-seats, a little retired from the general company, and converse with her upon subjects agreeable to themselves, but he felt doubtful.

He was, however, about to address some light remark to the heiress, who was in the centre of the group, when Lyle Indor addressed him, thus claiming his attention.

Mr. Indor was older than his lordship, being in his six-and-twentieth year. His appearance was very prepossessing, his countenance having a frank and boyish expression, and his manner being easy and careless.

He had a brown moustache, which he played with frequently with long and taper fingers that might have belittled a woman. There was an air of effeminacy about him, which was increased by the quantity and delicacy of his perfumes, his hair and handkerchief sending forth the sweetest of odours, and by the handsome diamond ring he wore.

Lord Ashcroft liked him from the moment he saw him, while the Lady Lorean, a strong-minded woman, despised him, calling him in her own mind "a scented popinjay," and "a tedious dandy."

She retracted this opinion before the evening was over, for Indor devoted himself to her, paying her so many delicate and obtrusive compliments that she took a great fancy to him.

Lord Ashcroft had scarcely replied to the remark of Indor when Lady Egremont exclaimed:

"Lady Lorean has been telling me, Lord Ashcroft, that you had a serious adventure on your way here."

Lord Ashcroft bowed.

"What was it?" asked the earl, with some appearance of interest. "Did your horses get beyond the control of their drivers?"

"It was more serious than that," answered Lord Ashcroft, quietly. "I had the honour to be made a target of by some wanderer in the woods."

There was a general stir at this announcement, and the Lady Alexina drew a little nearer, her betrothed.

He noticed the act, and drew favourable inferences from it.

"How unfortunate that such a thing should have occurred!" exclaimed the earl. "I suppose it was an accident, or the work of some awkward sportsman."

"I think your conjectures are wide of the truth," said Lord Ashcroft, reflectively. "There was something about the occurrence that shows it to have been premeditated. I do not know positively that I was the victim intended, but the hand of an assassin directed the bullet that I narrowly escaped."

"But," said the earl, "what possible motive could there have been?"

"I know of none. My sister suggested that the act was that of a madman."

The earl shook his head, showing that that theory met with no assent from him, and then requested full particulars of the outrage.

Lord Ashcroft replied by giving a laud account of the affair, describing the obstructions along the road, the assault, and his pursuit of the assailant.

"Did you see the man's face?" inquired Mr. Indor.

"Unfortunately, I did not. He seemed rather stout and disproportionately tall. His clothes were dark, and he wore a small black cap. Beyond those few particulars, which attracted my notice as I pursued him, I cannot describe him."

"As you say," exclaimed the earl, after a period of thought, "the act was premeditated. I know of no lunatic in the vicinity of Egremont, and had there been one lurking about the foresters must have discovered him. The obstructions must have been placed on the road this afternoon, but who could have done it? I shall probe the matter thoroughly. Such an outrage, such a murderous assault shall not go unpunished."

"I rode over the road this morning," said Mr. Indor, "and there were no branches lying across it then. The earl's conjecture that they were placed there this afternoon is therefore true."

"What a pity you did not overtake the assassin!" said the earl, regretfully. "I would give much to have him locked up. But he shall reach that destination yet, and a worse imprisonment will follow. But I think," he added, "you said you brought away the gun?"

Ashcroft bowed, answering that it was at that moment in the corridor.

The earl immediately rang, ordering the weapon to be brought into the drawing-room. The order was obeyed by the footman, who, in powdered wig, brought in the gun, carrying it at arm's length that it might not explode and blow away his head, his

idea of guns being that they were "treacherous animals."

The weapon was deposited upon a table, and the party began to examine it.

It was plain but well made, and seemed calculated to do excellent service for a long period. There was nothing particular about it except a small plate riveted upon it. Upon this plate, which was of silver, were scratched some initials, which were at length deciphered as being G. K.

"G. K.," said the earl, musingly. "Here is an excellent clue to the assassin, but I know no one whose initials are G. K."

"Might it not belong to one of the servants or foresters?" suggested the Lady Alexina.

"A valuable suggestion, my dear G. It is the initial of George. What George is there at Egremont?" mused the earl, keeping his eyes upon the inscription as if it might further enlighten him. "There are plenty of Georges, I daresay, but the trouble is to find one whose surname begins with K. There is Horley—but his name begins with H. Then there's Frath—but that won't do! I am not good at guessing!"

"What is the name of that young man, guardian, who lives near the Kays in the wood?" inquired the heiress.

The earl reflected a moment, then his face lighted up, and he exclaimed:

"Alexina has guessed it. Her wit is always keener than mine. What forester's name is Gosman Kepp, and now I think of it, he always carries a gun in his hand, and I don't doubt but that this is the very one!"

"The initials are certainly those of Gosman Kepp," said Indor. "I wonder we didn't think of him at once."

"But Kepp could never have been his lordship's assailant," remarked the countess. "There is not a better forester or better-beloved man employed about Egremont!"

"Appearances are sometimes deceptive!" returned her husband, oracularly. "Kepp has served me well, has been orderly and brave, and never failed in his duty, but how can we know but that his faithfulness was only a mere cloak to hide a heart of perfidy?"

"I don't believe Kepp was the assassin, guardian," said the Lady Alexina, with sudden energy. "His past life ought to be reckoned in his favour. Surely, you will not condemn him unheard. He could have had no motive in assassinating his lordship—"

She paused, with sudden and unwonted embarrassment, observing that Lord Ashcroft was regarding her with approbation for her defence of the forester.

Lyle Indor was looking at her too, with a soft and gentle steadiness, as if he were surprised at her interest in her guest.

"Alexina is so tender-hearted!" said the earl. "She always defends the weak and the absent. But this time she is in the wrong. This gun is proof enough to convict Kepp, and, were I a magistrate, I should not hesitate a moment to convict him."

"Would you not be transcending the duties of a magistrate by convicting him?" asked the Lady Lorean, with a smile. "I thought it was the duty of the jury to decide upon a prisoner's guilt or innocence!"

"You are right, Lady Lorean. My anxiety is too great to admit of stopping to choose my words. My idea is that Kepp must be instantly apprehended before he can have a chance to escape, should he attempt to do so!"

"I think, my lord," observed Ashcroft, "that the plea of the Lady Alexina deserves attention: I have not yet seen this man, and he may prove not to be the assassin. He may have lent his gun, and the borrower may have been my assailant. If he be really guilty, he will not flee, thinking he cannot be easily identified. So long as he can retain it he will not throw up a lucrative situation. I cannot think of any possible motive to assign to him for such an act—in short, Lord Egremont, I desire that nothing be said against the man, but that I be permitted to return him his gun. We can judge something from his manner on receiving it!"

"Lord Ashcroft's idea is very excellent," remarked Lyle Indor. "It has the merit of giving the man a chance to disprove the charge. Should he have lent or sold his gun, we shall have been spared the pain of wounding his feelings by a false accusation. Should his explanation be unsatisfactory, we can watch, and allow subsequent events to prove or disprove the present charge!"

This resolution met with universal favour, although Lord Egremont at first thought it incumbent upon him to take some immediately decisive step.

Thinking enough had been said upon the subject of his adventure, Lord Ashcroft changed the subject by inquiring if the Lady Alexina were fond of music.

"I am extremely fond of it," answered the heiress. "I often amuse myself many hours at a time at my piano!"

Very naturally, the next remark was a request that she would play.

Yielding assent, the Lady Alexina permitted her betrothed to escort her to the grand piano, giving a deprecating glance to Lyle Indor as she went, which he did not seem to notice, as he seated himself beside the Lady Lorean Ashcroft.

Taking her seat upon the music-stool, and giving her fan into Ashcroft's keeping, the heiress ran her fingers over the keys by a prelude, and then played one of those wild, weird bursts of melody called waltzes. It had been composed by Strauss, the author of the *Sophia Waltz*, with which so strange a legend is connected, and the Lady Alexina executed it admirably.

Her impassive countenance betrayed no feeling or sympathy with the music, but her betrothed was too much entranced with the latter to notice the former. It is probable that, listening to the entrancing strains, he believed it impossible but that her soul must be in unison with them, and be borne upon those waves of melody, as was his own.

The evening passed but too quickly, and the hour for retiring came at last.

Lord Egremont accompanied Lord Ashcroft to the chamber of the latter, anxious to learn his opinion of the heiress. He put the question frankly, and the guest answered with very slight hesitation:

"She is strikingly beautiful, and very accomplished. I am so far delighted with her, and bless my father for having chosen her for me. She is as generous and merciful as I had hoped, and I am quite satisfied to have had my adventure to-night since it has shown me those noble qualities in her. You have a lovely ward, my lord, and I trust she will reciprocate the sentiments with which I regard her."

"I am glad you are so pleased with her," responded the earl, heartily. "I can see that she is equally pleased with you. She has some natural longings for society, and desires a change from this eternal beating of the waves upon the rock, and against the cliff, and I shall not object to your marriage with her whenever both of you shall appoint. It will be hard for us to lose her—"

"She will not be lost to you, my lord," interposed Ashcroft.

"I hope not. But, at any rate, her marriage will be a pecuniary loss to me, since with it ceases the handsome income I have enjoyed as her guardian. You are so wealthy that his loss would look small to you, whereas to me it means an entrance upon a life at which my soul recoils!"

"Say no more, my lord," responded the guest. "I can understand how much this confession must cost you, but I should never permit you to suffer any annoyance. Should the Lady Alexina honour me with her hand in marriage I should be only too happy to offer her relative and guardian some testimonial of my respect and gratitude for the years he has devoted to the formation of her character and to her happiness. I shall be delighted to join with her in the gratification of any desire you may express, and you will confer a great favour upon me by asking of me anything in my power to grant."

Ashcroft spoke with such sincerity as pleased his host beyond expression, and he could only wring his hand in silence.

Already he beheld himself the master of Melrose, receiving handsome revenues from its large farm, and directing the management of the home-estate.

He did not linger long with his guest after obtaining this promise, but went to his own chamber to rejoice his wife with relations of Lord Ashcroft's unexpected liberality.

Gradually the lights died out of the mansion. The drawing-room and chambers became shrouded in gloom, and the guests and their host yielded to repose. And then the dashing of the waves seemed to grow louder, almost filling the air with their monotonous sound, yet now and then sending forth walls which might have been uttered by lost spirits.

The last light had died out from the dwelling when the private door looking upon the cliffs was softly opened, and a woman's form, shrouded in a close hood and long black cloak, stepped out upon the cliffs.

The faint light of the stars showed her to be the Lady Alexina.

The wind blew in more freshly from the sea, playing with her garments and tossing her hair under the shadow of her hood as she stood by the door looking anxiously along the cliff, in the direction of the rocks.

She seemed to be looking for some person, but the cliffs were desolate, not a sign of human life being visible upon them.

She took two or three steps forward, paused with an air of indecision, glancing back at the mansion, and then called, softly.

"Lyle, Lyle!"

As these words sounded upon the air someone stirred, and then the form of Lyle Linder was visible. "Lyle," repeated the heiress, joyfully. She glided along the edge of the cliff with a quick step, and soon stood by the side of the frank and boyish-looking nephew of Lady Egremont.

CHAPTER IV.

Will thou draw near the nature of the gods?
Draw near them then in being merciful;
Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.

Shakespeare.

In the midst of Egremont Wood, upon one of the lesser avenues traversing the forest, stood the cottage of Donald Kay, the chief forester. It had been designed by the father of the Lady Alexina, and was a picturesque ornament to the spot. It was simply a Swiss chalet, with some modifications appropriate to its present situation, and its verandahs were entwined with ivy and a few vines, the latter being however now quite stripped of their leaves.

Donald Kay had lived within it for many years, and he frequently expressed a hope that there he might end his days, as his wife had already done. It was endeared to him by all the pleasant memories of his life, and there his only child had been born.

He had long been the chief forester, and had filled the post worthily, and gained the respect of all who knew him.

On the day subsequent to the arrival of the Lady Lorean and Lord Ashcroft at Egremont Donald Kay sat before a bright wood fire in the large kitchen of his pretty chalet, smoking his pipe.

He was a tall, stout man, with a muscular frame and iron sinews, although his hair and beard were as white as snow. His eyes were yet keen, and strangely contradicted the aged appearance caused by his hair, and his face was scored with deep lines which grief rather than years had traced.

His entire appearance was that of a man weighed down by a terrible sorrow or fear, which had produced upon him the effects of extreme age.

This sorrow was generally ascribed to the loss of his wife, whose death had occurred some fifteen years before, but the sorrow had existed long before her death—a fact not generally remembered.

Jean Kay had been a good wife and a notable housekeeper, but she had not been a character to awaken such lasting regret in the heart of her husband. Yet, since her death, he had never offered her place to any other woman, and had shunned their companionship as if it had been a pestilence.

His only friends were his daughter and a young under-forester named Gosman Kepp, the one upon whom the suspicions of Lord Egremont had rested as the assailant of Lord Ashcroft on the previous day.

While the old man smoked his pipe in silent thoughtfulness, gazing abstractedly upon the ceiling, a pretty scene was transpiring behind him.

Near one of the windows, in a low chair, engaged in the uromantic employment of darning hose, sat the daughter of the forester, a demure look on her face. Gosman Kepp was seated beside her, looking at her with lover-like impatience.

"Answer me now, Jessy," he pleaded, earnestly.

But Miss Jessy affected to be in a meditative mood, and apparently did not hear the words of her companion.

Not yet twenty, Jessy Kay was a bright, laughing creature, as wild as the fawns that lived in her native forest, and as gay and blithe as the birds that gathered about the chalet to eat the supply of crumbs she had at such times always in readiness for them.

No sorrow had ever darkened her young life, for at her mother's death she had been too young to feel her loss, and she was wont to fill the cottage with the music of her voice and laughter, frequently beguiling her father from the sorrow over which he brooded so constantly.

In personal appearance she was a fair specimen of a Scotch maiden, being as pretty as a wild rose. In manners she was coquettish, delighting to torment Gosman Kepp, whom she knew loved her sincerely, to the very height of endurance.

Kepp was a tall and straight young man, with a plain, honest face, and a rough sincerity about him that prepossessed one in his favour.

He was the only son of a widow, who dwelt with him in a small cottage at the farther end of the forest. His position as under-forester had been procured for him by Donald Kay, who had from his earliest boyhood made him the object of his care. Although the widow Kepp had managed to earn a comfortable subsistence by doing needlework for the housekeeper at "the great house," as Egremont mansion was termed, yet Donald Kay had insisted upon sending the lad to school with Jessy, who was four

years the junior of Kepp, and had always acted towards him the part of a guardian.

"Won't you give me an answer, Jessy?" persisted Kepp as the coquettish maiden pretended to count the stitches upon her needle.

"What a bother!" replied Miss Jessy, pushing back her chair; "what a trouble men are, to be sure!"

"But, Jessy, I've asked you a dozen different times if you'd be my wife, and you'll never give me an answer. You know I love you better than all the world. Say, won't you have me?"

"Perhaps so," answered the coquette, carelessly. "If I can't do better, Gosman, I must 'o'en take up with you."

Undaunted as was this response, it nearly overjoyed her lover, who exclaimed:

"That's more 'n you ever said before, Jessy, an' a word from you is equal to a dozen from another!"

"So you've been making love to others then?" inquired the provoking Jessy.

"Nay, I meant not that, Jess. You are enough to drive a man wild!"

Miss Jessy smiled so sweetly at this moment that the impatience of her lover subsided, and he drew nearer to her, beseeching her to name the day that would make him the happiest of men.

"Say ten years from now," said Jessy, demurely, pausing in her work. "By that time I shall be thirty, you know, and of course not so eligible. And then, if in the meantime no other appears with plenty of siller and wantin' me, I'll accept you."

"Ten years, and you all the while free to twod another!—no, I won't endure that."

"What a man has to endure he has to," observed Miss Jessy, sentimentally.

"But I shan't have to do this!" cried Kepp, fairly driven to desperation. "Say you'll have me, Jessy, or I'll go and wed the blacksmith's lass this very day—see if I don't!"

Now the forester's daughter, in the very depths of her soul, really loved her suitor. He had been her lover from childhood, the unwearied attendant upon her caprices, and the object of her coquettish wiles, since she had first donned long gowns.

She had loved to show to her friends how devoted he was to her, how miserable her frowns could make him, and had conceived quite a dislike to the blacksmith's daughter, who had expressed her pity for the under-forester in a way which Miss Jessy was pleased to construe as an evidence of a desire to win him from her.

Her happiness and vanity were both at stake in the matter. No one should say that her lover could be won from her, and she smiled coquettishly and said:

"Can't you take a joke, Gosman? If you can't I advise you to hasten to the kirk with the blacksmith's lass."

"Was it all a joke, Jessy?" cried the lover, eagerly. "And will you be mistress of my cottage and make my home as bright as you make this?"

Miss Jessy replied that she might possibly at some period be induced to comply with Mr. Kepp's wishes, and the lover boldly snatched a kiss from her lips, and without waiting to allow her a farther chance to torment him, arose and approached the forester.

Astonished at his audacity, and wondering what he was about to say, Jessy threw aside her work and followed him.

"If you please, Mr. Kay," began Kepp, his resolution faltering, "I should like to speak to you!"

The forester withdrew his gaze from the ceiling to the young man, and intimated his willingness to listen.

"It's about those broken palings, I suppose," he said. "I'm going to attend to them directly."

"It's not about the palings, Mr. Kay. It's about Jessy!"

"What's Jess been doing, Kepp?"

"Nothing, sir—only promising to be my wife. And we want your consent!"

"The audacity!" exclaimed Miss Jessy, tossing her head in pretended indignation. "As if I'll have him!"

"Yes, sir," said Kepp, firmly, avoiding the girl's glances. "Jessy has promised to have me if you will give us your blessing!"

Kay looked from one to the other of the young couple, and then deliberately arose, knocked the ashes from his pipe, laid the latter upon a wooden shelf, and said:

"This is all nonsense, Gosman. You'd better marry Ailie, the blacksmith's girl. Jess don't care for you—"

"How do you know that, father?" interrupted his daughter. "I know who I like and who I don't like!"

"But you don't always know what's best for you," returned her father. "I thought you cared for Gosman only as a sister cares for a brother, and here

you are wanting to marry. It can't be—it can't be!"

The face of the under-forester flushed deeply as he said:

"But why not, Mr. Kay? You can't refuse me because I'm not as respectable as any young man. I've saved my wages, and have something laid by for wife and bairns when they come. I am steady—"

"I know all that, boy. But you can't marry my Jess!"

"Did I ever do anything to make you think ill of me, Mr. Kay?"

"Never. You are a lad after my own heart!"

"Then you refuse me for a son-in-law because my father ran away from my mother twenty years ago, and has never come back? You blame me because he deserted his home? Perhaps you think I should run away from Jessy—"

"Say no more!" said the forester, his face pale.

"You can't have Jessy. Let that end the matter. You must give each other up, and say no more about marriage."

"I will not give Gosman up for a mere whim of yours, father," said Jessy, firmly, her coquettishness vanishing. "I will wait for him years, if need be, but I shall not give him up."

Her lover thanked her by an ardent and grateful look.

"If you marry Gosman Kepp," said the forester, sternly, raising his arm menacingly, "you will do so with my curse upon your head. There is a great gulf between you and him which nothing can ever bridge, and so sure as you attempt to cross it, my bitterest curse shall be upon you both! You shall both be cursed in health and possessions, in the children you may have, and in each other! I would a thousand times rather lay my girl in her grave than see her the wife of Gosman Kepp!"

An impressive silence followed, the young couple being too astonished and terror-stricken to speak, but it was broken at last by the forester, who took down his coat from the peg on which it hung, put on his cap, and left the house.

"What could he mean, Gosman?" said the girl, in a frightened tone, as she crept nearer her lover.

"I don't know!" answered Kepp, half stupefied.

"Did you see how wild his look was?—He was in earnest, and I'm afraid you'll submit to his unjust will, Jessy!"

"Never!" cried the girl. "I can't marry you now, Gosman, for I can't disobey my father. But I will try to win his consent, and I'll wait for you all my life, if need be!"

"Heaven bless you for the promise, Jessy! And you will plight me your troth?"

Jessy assented, and her lover drew from his pocket a bent sixpence. This he broke in half, giving one piece to the girl. She put it in her bosom, and he placed his near his heart.

This simple act was regarded by each as a solemn seal to their betrothal.

"We will pray that your father may see his injustice, Jessy," said Kepp, after a brief silence. "Perhaps we may not have many years to wait. Something may favour us!"

At this juncture the sound of horses' hoofs resounded upon the wintry air, and the young couple hastened to the door, and went upon the verandah, as a party of riders came up, and stopped in front of the cottage.

The party comprised Lord and Lady Egremont, their ward, and their guests, followed at a little distance by several grooms.

"Your name is Gosman Kepp, is it not?" asked the earl, abruptly, of the under-forester.

"It is, my lord!" was the response, and Kepp shrank back a little from the gaze of the ladies, who seemed to him like visitants from a superior world.

The earl beckoned to one of the grooms in advance of the rest, and he rode up with the gun Lord Ashcroft had captured, deposited it on the verandah, and then retreated.

"Is that your weapon?" demanded Lord Egremont.

Kepp hesitated a moment and then answered confidently in the affirmative.

"You acknowledge it then?"

"Yes, my lord!"

"Permit me to observe to your lordship," said Lord Ashcroft, in an undertone, riding up to the earl, "that the man might not have intended to take my life yesterday. It has occurred to me this morning that the shot might have been fired by accident, and that the man took to flight through fear rather than guilt."

"But that theory will not account for the obstructions."

"True, my lord. They cannot be accounted for except upon the hypothesis that evil was intended. Still, if you please, I would like to have the young man questioned gently. He has not a bad countenance!"

"Frequently the worst people are masked under

the guise of virtue," said the earl, quoting one of those trite observations he admired. "Still, I will act upon your lordship's suggestion."

Lyle Indor drew nearer with the Lady Alexina, and the earl, turning to the surprised under-forester, said:

"You probably know how this weapon came into my possession, Kepp. It was picked up by Lord Ashcroft when he pursued you yesterday, after you shot at him. We would like to hear any explanations you can make about the matter."

"Picked up? Pursued?" muttered the accused. "I do not understand you, my lord!"

"Perhaps I had better refresh your memory," said the earl, with ironic emphasis. "You will need, perhaps, to be informed that some distinguished guests arrived at Egremont yesterday; that obstructions were placed across the road running through the corner of the wood, to impede their progress; that, when their progress was thus impeded, a shot was fired from the wood at Lord Ashcroft, who narrowly escaped with his life."

Kepp looked blankly at Lord Egremont, and Jessy gazed upon her lover as though she would read his soul.

"Perhaps, also," continued the earl, in the tone he had before used, "you would like me to recall how the carriage stopped, and Lord Ashcroft sprang out in pursuit of the villain who had fired upon him; how the man fled, dropping his gun—the very gun you have just acknowledged as your own."

"I didn't fire!" said the under-forester. "I did not obstruct the road. Why should your lordship suspect me?"

"Your gun convicts you. The gun has been acknowledged by you, and who should have carried it but the owner?"

The usually ruddy face of the under-forester grew quite colourless, and he faltered:

"How could I know your lordship's guests were expected? What object could I have had in shooting Lord Ashcroft?"

"That is what we wish to discover. You knew very well that Lord Ashcroft was expected, for I sent word to Kay to have the wood in perfect order because of the expected arrival."

The knees of the accused shook under him, and becoming conscious of Jessy's astonishment, he turned away his face.

"What have you got to say to all this?" demanded the earl, after waiting several minutes in vain for an answer.

"I—I lent the gun yesterday," said Kepp, huskily.

"Then why didn't you say so at first?" demanded his lordship, impatiently. "Your manner was such as almost to declare you guilty."

Jessy breathed a sigh of relief at her lover's reply, and her emotion awakened a feeling of sympathy in Lord Ashcroft's breast.

"I knew Gosman could not have done such a thing, my lord," said the forester's daughter, proudly, yet timidly. "He never did a wicked thing in his life!"

Kepp recovered himself a little as the girl defended him, and lifted his head but only to drop it lower upon his breast, and Jessy alone saw the grateful expression upon his face.

"Well, to whom did you lend the gun?" inquired the earl.

Kepp lowered his head still more, but made no reply.

Lord Ashcroft had become interested in the accused from seeing how Jessy clung to him, disbelieving the accusation, and he now said, kindly:

"Will you not tell us the name of the man who borrowed your gun, Kepp? You are in no way to blame for having lent it him, and you need not fear any violence at his hands."

"I—I cannot tell his name, my lord," faltered Kepp.

"Are you restrained by fear?"

Kepp replied in the negative.

"Do you not see in what a position this refusal places you?" demanded Lord Egremont, his patience nearly exhausted. "Such conduct as this is enough to convict you. You had better make a complete confession and let us know your motive, for your actions declare you to have been his lordship's assailant."

A low cry broke from Jessy's lips, and she caught her lover's arm, saying:

"Don't you see they suspect you, lad? They think you wanted to kill his lordship! Tell them who you lent the gun to. Tell them, Gosman."

"I can't!"

"Tell me, then—or you'll break my heart!" and poor Jessy's voice sounded pitifully.

"I can't!"

Jessy gave a wild, incredulous look at her lover, and then sat down upon the step, covering her face with her apron, unmindful of the chill creeping to

her very bones under that deadlier chill of suspicion aroused by her lover's words.

The under-forester, with downcast eyes and drooping form, flinching under the stern gaze of his accusers, might well have been thought guilty of an attempt at a terrible crime.

Lord Egremont addressed him in words that caused poor Jessy to writhe as under personal blows, but at length her love conquering her suspicions, she sprang to her feet and stood at her lover's side.

"I know he is innocent, my lord!" she cried, hysterically. "If he were to say he did it and swear to it, I wouldn't believe him. He lent the gun, indeed he did! I forget who to—but I saw him!"

"Jessy!" said her lover, in a low tone of reproof. "Don't you see you're making my case worse by telling what isn't true? Poor girl! You didn't know what you said in your excitement!"

It was true that poor Jessy had scarcely been conscious of what she said in her anguish. She had once or twice been upon the point of declaring herself his accomplice, with the wild determination to share his fate, whatever it might be.

It certainly looked ominous for the under-forester at that moment, and he felt it.

The earl drew Lord Ashcroft aside to consult with him upon the best course to be adopted. He was decidedly in favour of summoning the grooms and commanding them to take Kepp into custody, and all he desired was Lord Ashcroft's co-operation or approbation.

Mr. Indor, with a look of pity upon his frank, effeminate-looking face, drew nearer to the Lady Alexina, from whom he had momentarily strayed, and said:

"That poor girl is quite heart-broken. This Kepp must be her lover."

"Probably he is," returned the heiress, carelessly, as if the lovers of persons of such inferior rank were nothing to her. "I feel sorry for her," said the Lady Lorean, who was very near Alexina. "As for him, he shows his guilt plainly enough, and I have no pity for him. Why is it that women must bear all the suffering and all the weight of men's wrongdoing?"

The words penetrated Jessy's ears, and she looked up, encountering the glances of the group.

She had often seen the lady of Egremont riding through the wood attended by her guardian or groom, and knew her well by sight.

To the simple forest girl it seemed that the Lady Alexina possessed unlimited power, and the idea suddenly entered her distracted mind to appeal to her for mercy.

She did so instantly.

Quitting her lover, she ran down the steps to the side of the heiress, and exclaimed:

"Oh, lady, please save Gosman. He lent the gun. I know he did, because he says so. I am willing to swear that he lent it. His lordship will let him go if you will intercede for him. Have pity upon us!"

The forest girl clasped her hands in entreaty.

The wild appeal attracted all eyes to the Lady Alexina—even the earl's and Lord Ashcroft's.

The accused looked at her pleadingly and imploringly.

Flattered by being thus made the arbiter of a man's fate, and doubting nothing of her power to do as she pleased, the heiress drew herself up, sitting her palfrey with queenly stateliness, and amused herself by listening yet a little longer to the impassioned pleading of poor Jessy.

But at length she condescended to reply graciously:

"Return to your lover, my poor girl. Whatever influence I may possess shall be used in his favour."

Not waiting for Jessy's grateful thanks, she touched her horse lightly with her jewelled whip, and rode up to the earl and Lord Ashcroft.

"My dear child," said the former, "you have given a very rash promise. Justice demands that he should be tried, and, if guilty, as he probably is, that he should be duly punished. The guests of Egremont may not be shot at with impunity!"

"I will not attempt to argue the man's guilt or innocence," responded the heiress, smiling upon her betrothed, "since Lord Ashcroft and my guardian are doubtless better fitted to judge him. Yet I desire that he may remain free. The decision should be with Lord Ashcroft. If I ask him to let the doubts in the case weigh in the favour of this poor man it will be my first request of his lordship—"

"It is granted already," interposed Lord Ashcroft, gallantly. "I should be sorry indeed to disappoint your generous heart, or to add more deeply to the weight of grief of that poor young forest girl. I shall never appear against the man!"

The Lady Alexina gave a pleased look at her betrothed, and murmured:

"I beg your lordship will not construe my request

into a token of indifference at the fearful fate which so nearly overtook you!"

"It would be impossible for me to entertain such a thought, particularly after your desire to the contrary," returned his lordship.

The heiress bowed, and rode back to declare her success, and to receive the thanks that were to her like incense, since they tended to flatter her love of power, and to exalt her in the eyes of her friends.

"The man will probably leave Egremont, my lord," said the earl, addressing Lord Ashcroft. "He shall not be driven away, though I would like him to remain that I may have him closely watched. A little study of his character may enable one to arrive at some theory of his motive in attempting your lordship's assassination!"

Lord Ashcroft bowed assent, and hastened to rejoin the Lady Alexina, whose virtues shone brighter than ever in his eyes.

The examination finished, and a few kindly words addressed to the grateful Jessy, the riders did not linger long at the *chalet*, continuing their way along the wide avenues of the wood.

They had passed from view, followed by their grooms, when the under-forester sat down upon the steps, burying his face in his hands.

Poor Jessy, her coquetry all forgotten, and her womanly kindness and tenderness in the ascendant, sat down beside him and attempted to take his hand, saying, imploringly:

"Tell me who you lent the gun to, Gosman, dear. If it be a secret it shall never cross my lips!"

Kepp shook his head despairingly.

"Won't you tell me? Surely since you've given me your troth I have a right to your secret. Are you afraid I shall tell it to everybody, Gosman? Can't you trust your promised wife?"

"I can't," groaned the under-forester. "Your words wound me like a knife, Jessy. I can't tell you who I lent the gun to, lest— But what am I saying? I am as horrified as yourself, Jessy. Do you believe me?"

"I don't know," said Jessy, wildly. "I try to, Gosman—but things look so suspicious against you. Oh, if you'd only explain a little. And yet I know I can trust you."

The under-forester raised his head, looked upon the blanched and terror-stricken face of the girl—that face which in all its expressions he so tenderly loved—and his gaze had in it all the wildness of despair.

For a moment he looked thus, and then he slowly and painfully arose, as if all his limbs were benumbed or the life frozen within them, shook himself as if to arouse his faculties, picked up the gun that had caused so much woe, and plunged into the depths of the forest.

(To be continued.)

A FATAL FIT.—William Smith, aged twenty-two, a private in the 109th Light Bombay Infantry, quartered at Chatham, while being practised in running drill was seized with a fit, and died in a few hours; just previously to being ordered out to drill he had had his dinner.

HEART DISEASE AMONG SOLDIERS.—According to the *British Medical Review* heart disease is a prevalent malady among English soldiers; the strain of the knapsack straps produces on the heart a substance analogous to corn, the size of a five-shilling piece, called by medical surgeons "the soldier's spot." In 1862 14.76 per cent. of the men discharged were lost to the service from this cause.

COAL IN RUSSIA.—In Russia no coal is exported although the beds of the Donets are rich in coal and other minerals; the amount of coal produced in this place was 128,571 tons; but this is a very insignificant quantity compared with the enormous mass of coal which the Donets is capable of furnishing. In 1842 there were only 225 beds in a working condition, whereas now there are about 700, and each year the spring rains bring to light others. Coal-fields also exist on the western flank of the Ural Mountains. 554,858 English tons were imported into Russia in 1865.

OUR WONDERFUL CLIMATE.—Here we are in the midst of what is conventionally called "winter," with roses blooming in the open air, strawberries ripening as in summer, orange-trees in blossom where there are any orange-trees at all, bouquets of open air violets selling at a bit on the streets, second-crop apples that have just ripened exhibited in market; and grapes that have never suffered from contact with sav-dust, still plump, plentiful and cheap at all the fruit stands. Gardening to supply the city with early vegetables has actively commenced around the bay, and young radishes and green peas can even now be bought at luxurious prices. Winter! the word should be abolished from our vocabulary as a superfluous.—*San Francisco, Dec. 29th.*



[A FAMILY PICTURE.]

THE WATER-WOLF.

CHAPTER V.

THE dwelling of Sir Charles Mayne, Ex-governor of the Bermudas, was a stately, handsome residence, specially adapted to its exposed situation. It stood upon the brow of a gently sloping hill, and was backed by a grove of hardy cedars. In front of it was a wide, noble lawn, dotted with clumps of trees, and upon either hand were orchards, meadows, gardens and shrubberies.

The mansion itself was large, and covered a great deal of ground. It was but one storey in height, and yet a handsome edifice, with two large wings. The kitchens and servants' rooms were in a detached building in the rear, half concealed by a mass of shrubbery.

The front of the mansion was grand and imposing, having a wide Greek portico, with massive columns and graceful balconies.

A wide avenue traversed the lawn, running from the great gates by the picturesque lodge up to the handsome carved doors that had been brought from England years before, and this avenue was lying on either side by double rows of mangrove trees.

About an hour before sunset upon the day on which the preceding events occurred the lodge gates swung wide on their hinges, and a horseman well mounted dashed swiftly up the avenue.

He was Sir Charles Mayne.

He was an elderly man, with hair and beard of iron gray, and with a stout figure, which was evidently of more than medium height. His face was round and ruddy with health and vigour, showing that he thoroughly enjoyed himself. There was a genial expression upon his countenance, and an habitual kindness in his bright blue eyes, that stamped him at once as the noble, courteous gentleman.

He was a brave, true man, with a generous heart, yet with a fault that had heretofore been harmless enough, but which might yet bring unhappiness upon himself or others. This fault was the result of education and was one he possessed in common with most well-born English gentlemen. It was pride of caste, and if anyone had ever excuse for indulging in that pride it was Sir Charles, who traced his descent through many generations of Maynes, and proudly boasted that not one of the name or race had ever committed a crime or degraded the family by a mésalliance.

As he rode up a groom made his appearance, assisted his master to alight, and then withdrew with the steed to the stables.

The next moment a young gentleman descended the steps, advanced to the portly baronet, and said:

"Well, father, any news of the Seabird yet?"

"No, Harold; but then it's hardly time to expect any. That storm of the day before yesterday may have driven it out of its course. You are getting anxious, are you, to see your betrothed wife, Miss Cranston?"

A flush kindled the fair cheek of Harold Mayne, but he did not reply.

He was a handsome youth, with a wide white forehead, a pair of bright blue eyes, like his father's, a profusion of fair curling hair flung carelessly away from his brows, and a pleasant, smiling mouth. He wore no beard nor moustache, and his delicate features would have had an effeminate appearance but for the manly glow of earnestness that distinguished them, and the brave, resolute air that characterized him. Delicate as he looked, Harold Mayne possessed a lion-like courage, beside strength and agility like that which appertains to that monarch of the forest.

The baronet did not notice the flush on his son's cheek, and said, gravely:

"I've been over to see the Governor, Harry. You know he sent me a note this morning, requesting me to call upon him to-day, as he wished my advice. He's greatly troubled about the depredations of that animal or being to which, for want of a better name, has been given the title of WATER-WOLF. It seems that the terrible creature has been seen. Mr. Commissioner Hilton disappeared, and not a trace has been obtained of his fate!"

"Mr. Hilton disappeared!" echoed Harold.

"As completely as though a shark had eaten him! He left his office at eight in the evening, with a bag of gold under his arm, and he has not been seen since! It has been suggested that he might have fallen into the sea, as he keeps his bachelor establishment at the Cliff cottage, which is approached by a perilous path. But the suggestion is worth nothing. Men have disappeared again and again in this same manner. But they have invariably been men of wealth and influence. They have always disappeared in the night time, and nothing has been learned that could explain their disappearance."

"Nothing, father, save that once or twice a terrible animal has been seen upon the beach, and which, upon being pursued, has taken to the water, into which it went with a frightful splash. Young Lorfax saw the creature one night, without being

seen by it, and he says it had great goggle eyes, and fearful-looking arms or feelers, which it kept moving nervously, while it breathed hoarsely, as an alligator might have done. He fainted away, and when he recovered his senses the Water-Wolf had vanished, leaving a slimy trail upon the sands."

"It is this horrible creature that is working desolation among us, Harold. No one now dares be out after dark unless compelled, and a general feeling of insecurity prevails. In view of this state of affairs, the Governor has determined to offer a reward of one thousand pounds for the capture, living or dead, of this dreadful monster. The placards will be posted up to-morrow."

"A thousand pounds!" said Harold, with a wistful look appearing in his bright, honest eyes. "If I could but earn it!"

The baronet smiled upon his son, and answered: "You will have no need of it, Harry. Let these poor fishermen strive for it. The son of Sir Charles Mayne should not risk his life for a paltry sum."

"True, father, but a thousand pounds would clear off the mortgage on Mayne Manor, or could be so employed as to bring in a decent income. I wish we could have something besides the name and title."

And he sighed.

Sir Charles heard the last sentence uttered by his son. He had taken a step or two towards the house, but now paused, and said:

"Harry, we must not speak of the Water-Wolf before your mother. She would not sleep to-night if she were to hear of Mr. Hilton's disappearance, and would be frightened if we wished to leave the house during the evening."

"I will be careful, father."

The baronet linked his arm in that of his son, and they passed in together.

Sir Charles left his son in the wide, room-like hall, and passed into a dressing-room that opened off a branching corridor. He was absent but a few minutes, and returned with his portly figure attired in a suit of fresh white linen, with his hair brushed smoothly back from his ruddy, genial face, with a half-opened rose-bud thrust into the top button-hole of his coat, and with a faint odour of delicate perfume about him.

He looked like a lover about to seek the bower of his lady-love, and there was even an eagerness in his manner that served to deepen the illusion.

"Come, Harry," he said, smiling. "Your mother expects us."

Harold arose and followed his father along the tessellated floor of a wide corridor that conducted

to the eastern wing, where the family rooms were situated.

Arrived at a handsomely decorated door the baronet paused a moment until his son came up, and then they entered the room together.

There was a glow upon the face and a light in the eyes of the fair, hearty, genial man as he crossed the floor of that room, a glow and a light that could spring only from the greatest of beautifiers—love.

It was a fairy-like bower in which he found himself, and it was known as "The Rose Room."

It was the private apartment of Lady Mayne.

There was a soft rose-bud flush over everything, from the pink silk curtains under white lace over-drapery to the dainty white carpet over which trailed garlands of rosy-bued blossoms. The furniture was covered with brocade of rose and white; the walls were papered with white, upon which were painted exquisite buds and half-opened blossoms; and the windows were half covered with climbing vines which dropped before the open casement great clusters of odorous roses, which filled the air with delicious fragrance.

But more beautiful than all this display of taste and luxury was the priestess of the bower—Lady Mayne.

She reclined in an invalid's chair near one of the windows, and looked up with a glad smile at the entrance of her husband and son.

"You have returned, Charles?" she said, as he came and bent over her. "Sit down and tell me who you have seen."

The baronet obeyed her, taking possession of a chair beside her, and continuing to hold her hand in his own, while Harold seated himself upon a pile of cushions at his mother's feet.

"Surrounded, as usual, by your admirers, Rosamond," said Sir Charles, looking fondly upon her. "The Governor wanted to come and spend an hour with us this evening, but he has a press of official business, and is obliged to defer the visit."

Lady Mayne blushed and smiled.

No longer young, she yet preserved a great degree of youthful freshness and beauty. She had been an invalid for years, but no word of impatience had ever escaped her lips, no thought of repining had ever entered her heart.

She made sunshine in her home, and it was no wonder that her husband idolized her with far more than the love he had given her in her joyous youth, and that her son regarded her as a faultless saint from whom he could receive gentle sympathy in every joy or trial.

She was not thin, as might have been expected, and there was a delicate bloom on her soft cheeks, a clear lustre in her beautiful dark eyes, and a happy smile on her lovely mouth, that would have won her the meed of admiration even amid a host of younger ladies. Her brown hair, glistened with bronze, rippled away from her transparent temples, and was wrought into a classic coil at the back of her head.

Her attire was a loose robe of pale pink cashmere, and dainty frills of costly lace encircled her white throat and wrists. Her only ornament save her gentle loveliness was an opening rose, her favourite flower.

There was always about her an atmosphere of peace which was perceptible to everyone. Sir Charles never entered her presence with a frown upon his face, but he always came with a smile, like a young lover, bringing her the flowers she loved and the tenderness and affection that were her due. He came to her for counsel and comfort, which were always ready for him, and he always left her, even for a brief space, with a pang of regret.

In answer to her request the baronet related the events of the day; told her of the people he had met, discussed the news he had learned, and told one or two witty anecdotes, which provoked a sweet, rippling laugh from his wife.

Thus the hours glided away, and the evening deepened.

When the first shadows of twilight began to fall Harold arose and closed the window, let fall the pink and white curtains that no breath of evening air might penetrate to the fragile form of his mother, and then he lighted the chandelier.

The light came down softly through the ground glass globes, diffusing a mellow glow upon the lovely scene and upon the radiant being who made up the joy and sunshine of Sir Charles's life.

After a pause Harold said:

"I called at the office of the consignees of the Seabird about three o'clock and learned that they are still in complete ignorance about her."

"They had no doubts about her safety, however?"

"None worth mentioning. They think that she will arrive to-morrow without fail."

Sir Charles mused a moment in silence and then turned to his son:

"In any case, then, Harold," said he, "it is prob-

able that the judge and his daughter will soon be with us."

The young man repeated these final words un- easily, and with a sudden increase of colour on his handsome features.

"As you are well aware," said Sir Charles, "the judge and I are life-long friends and have always been as intimate as brothers. We were at college together, and there laid the foundation of our present attachment. In those days I had some advantage over the judge, in point of rank, and he has always had advantages over me, in point of fortune, but we have never ceased for a moment to bear each other an affection quite fraternal. For several years past, ever since I came here as Governor, the judge has talked of paying us a visit, but it was not until the present summer that this purpose could be effected."

"And so he is now coming?" said Harold, coldly, as he again moved uneasily.

"He is coming, my son, and his only daughter is with him. Permit me to hope that you are not only aware of the natural friendship that has so long existed between the judge and myself, but that you are equally aware of the arrangements long since formed and agreed upon between us to unite you and Miss Cranstoun in marriage."

The young man arose with marked uneasiness, and commenced walking to and fro in the apartment.

"Harold is well aware of this project," observed Lady Mayne, with an inquiring glance at her son. "I, of course, have kept him informed of the whole matter."

"It is true," declared Harold, with a decided flush on his cheeks. "I have long been aware of this project."

The manner with which these words were spoken was sufficient to tell Lady Mayne, with her quick motherly instincts, that the proposed marriage was directly opposed to the young man's wishes. Sir Charles, however, who had not yet penetrated the secret of his son's uneasiness, or even noticed that he was uneasy, merely moved his chair a little, so as to keep Harold under his observation, and then continued:

"Of this project, then, you have been duly informed, but not of all its bearings. It is time for me to state them. First and foremost the fact is that Miss Cranstoun, from all the accounts we receive of her, is one of the most estimable young ladies that the whole world can offer to your choice. No pains have been spared, either by her late esteemed mother or the judge, to render her worthy of the high station to which she has been called, by her birth and fortune."

"In short, an angel—nothing less," interrupted Harold, with a look of bitterness on his face, which he allowed only his mother to see.

"In good truth, the word is not misapplied to her," continued Sir Charles, in the same calm tone with which he had all along been speaking. "Miss Cranstoun, I am fully convinced, possesses all the qualities desirable in a wife or daughter. This fact has been, and is, my first and principal reason for wishing her to become, through a marriage with you, a member of our family."

"Your father speaks truly, Harold," said Lady Mayne, in her gentle voice, in time to prevent the utterance of an impatient response which had risen to the lips of the son. "He seeks only your happiness and honour. The great merit of Miss Cranstoun, the true nobility of her character, has always been the chief consideration which has fixed his heart upon the proposed union."

"But there is a second consideration," declared Sir Charles, quickly, before Harold could reply, "a second consideration, which is, in our unhappy circumstances, of the utmost importance. The judge is very wealthy. Amy's fortune will be something magnificent. You, on the other hand, are without expectations. You must marry an heiress, not only on your own account, but on mine—on your mother's. You know that we have lived for the last five years merely upon my meagre salary as Governor, and even that I have recently lost. The whole situation, therefore, resumes itself in this one declaration, my son, that you must marry Miss Cranstoun, or we shall soon find ourselves overwhelmed by the most biting poverty."

It was evident that Harold Mayne had "thought of it" while his father had been speaking, for the cold sweat of a mortal anguish had made its appearance upon his brow and features. The statements of the father had been as precise as weighty, and delivered in that calm tone of parental interest, which descends to the very depths of the heart of a son not dead to duty and affection, and every sentence, as fast as uttered, had fallen upon the soul of the listener with an effect that was crushing.

"I understand all your reasons," he replied, after a long pause, in a voice that he vainly strove to

render calm. "I admit all their value, and all the goodness you have for me—"

"It's settled, then?" interrupted Sir Charles, with a sudden burst of joy. "It is agreed that you will from this time forward, regard Miss Cranstoun as the lady of your choice, and that the friendship of the fathers shall be speedily cemented and renewed in the affection of their children?"

The manly form of Harold shook with his emotions. He essayed to speak, but his voice died away in an incoherent murmur—something seemed to choke him.

"He loves another," said Lady Mayne to herself, for the first time perceiving the whole secret of her son's agitation. "And he will never disobey his father! How dreadful!"

As only the wife and mother fully knew the noble nature of the men before her so only she could have fully perceived at that moment the bearings, the interests, all the saddening prospects of the conduct which had thus arisen between them.

She had thrown all her commentaries into that one silent reflection, "How dreadful!"

While these reflections were passing in the mind of Lady Mayne, who had covered her face with her hands to hide its sudden pallor, Harold had struggled with his emotions, and he now found voice to say:

"It is agreed, my dear father, that we will await events. How do we know that Miss Cranstoun will receive the homage you require me to give? How do we know that she is not already in love with another?"

"We know from the judge's own declaration," replied Sir Charles, as with the precision of his character and calling he drew a letter from his pocket. "Here is the judge's last letter to us, written a week before his departure from England, and in it he says that Amy has declared herself entirely at liberty to love you. That is the meaning of the statement, if not its precise substance."

For a full minute after receiving this assurance the young man continued to walk to and fro in the apartment, without daring to trust his voice in a reply.

"It seems strange," he finally said, taking refuge in generalities, "that a couple of mere children should be betrothed by their parents and held accountable in after years for the fulfilment of the contract. It seems that you and the judge have been talking of this match for eight or ten years."

"Longer than that, Harold—for fifteen years at the very least," declared Sir Charles. "We first spoke of the marriage, if I remember rightly, on the night Amy was born."

"Well, father," said Harold, calming himself by a desperate effort and speaking with a sadly resolute air, "we will await Miss Cranstoun's arrival. I will accede to your wishes and offer myself to her, and she shall be the arbiter of my fate. If she accept me, I will marry her."

The declaration was scarcely uttered when there came a hurried and excited knock at the door.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE are times when a knock on the door, especially a hurried and excited knock, like that which had thus resounded on the principal door of the Governor's mansion, is at once accepted as an announcement of evil.

Such a time was now present, on the part of the baronet and Harold.

As busy, as deeply interested, with the discussion of the proposed marriage, they at once dismissed all thoughts of it, and turned their attention to the new arrival, but without allowing Lady Mayne to even suspect the thrill of uneasiness that knock had caused them.

There were some things, as the reader has seen, that the father and son did not deem it prudent or necessary, in the delicate state of Lady Mayne's health, to allow to come to her notice, and the anxieties on which that sudden uneasiness was based, belonged to the number of those secrets.

Taking the hand of his wife, therefore, the baronet pressed it repeatedly to his lips, with all the gallantry of a gentleman of the old school, while he said:

"You will excuse us, until dinner, Rosamond? This visit is doubtless important. You will excuse me?"

The lady acknowledged, with a charming grace, this lover-like conduct of her husband, and Sir Charles quietly withdrew from her presence, after exchanging a significant glance with his son, by whom he was promptly followed.

"A gentleman in the drawing-room, your excellency," said an old family servant, encountering the baronet in the hall. "A gentleman from England, your excellency—the gentleman expected, Mr. Justice Cranstoun."

"Judge Cranstoun!" echoed the father and son

in a breath as they hastened towards the drawing-room.

They found the judge seated in one of the large arm-chairs with which the apartment was so liberally provided. He was unusually pale, almost haggard. The wasting effect of a score of years seemed to have passed over him during the last few hours.

"My dear Cranston!" exclaimed Sir Charles. "Thank heaven! you are at last with us!"

"The judge could not utter a word in reply, he could only strain the friend of his youth feebly to his heart, and burst into tears.

The baronet and Harold at once perceived that something terrible had happened, and both, at the same instant, became conscious of the absence of the judge's daughter.

"Ah, my dear friend!" murmured Sir Charles, much agitated. "What is the cause of this grief? Can it be that Amy—I see that Amy is not with you."

The tears of the father fell faster, and his form shook convulsively.

"Speak! for the love you bear us!" said Sir Charles as he threw his arms affectionately around the agonized father. "Something dreadful has happened! The Seabird—"

"Is at the bottom of the ocean," faltered the judge.

The silence of horror fell momentarily upon the listeners.

"She foundered in the gale Thursday night," added the judge. "The crew and passengers escaped in two boats. I have reached the islands in one of them, with several companions."

"And Amy?" demanded the baronet, finally finding his voice. "Amy is—"

"Heaven only knows where!" answered the sorrowing father, with an effort to control his emotions. "I cannot say that she is lost, for she did not go down with the ship. She escaped on a raft made by the sailors. She reached St. David's Island safely, driven ashore by the wind and the currents; but since then she has disappeared as suddenly, and entirely as if a whirlwind had caught her up to heaven."

"Disappeared!"

Sir Charles and Harold exchanged a quick and meaning glance as they uttered that word—the same thought occurring to each at the same moment—the thought of the dreadful visitant which had desolated so many homes at the islands, of the terrible Water-Wolf which had carried off so many Bermudians, to what fate no one knew—but not for worlds would they have breathed a word of this scourge to the judge at that moment.

"The raft, then, came ashore safely?" said Sir Charles, after a pause.

The judge assented, and murmured:

"As you know, Amy is the only relative left in the world to me, since the death of her sainted mother. And it is the strangeness of the poor child's disappearance, its suddenness, the horrible mystery enveloping it, that is killing me; we have searched—the sailors and I—the whole of St. David's Island, but without discovering a trace of her."

"The raft, then, is at St. David's?"

"Yes, my dear Sir Charles."

"But how do you know that Amy came ashore upon it?" asked the baronet.

"I will tell you. She had on a shawl at the moment the raft was hurled against her, when we were all struggling in the water. This shawl, torn in strips, is now tied to the raft in such a way as to show that it was torn in pieces expressly to lash someone upon it, and who can this person be but Amy herself?"

The value of this evidence was at once apparent to the listeners, and the judge continued:

"These pieces of shawl have been cut with a knife, thus showing that Amy reached the land safely, and either cut herself loose, or was rescued by someone on the island."

At the instant these statements were finished Harold Mayne suddenly started forward, for the first time presenting himself clearly to the judge's notice. The glow of a thrilling hope had appeared on the young man's features.

"I have an explanation to the mystery!" he declared, with the emphasis of a joyful conviction.

"The raft, you say, is at St. David's, with pieces of Miss Cranston's shawl still clinging to it, and showing that they have been cut with a knife?"

"Yes, yes," said the judge, breathlessly.

"Very good. This is the explanation: the raft, with Miss Cranston upon it, was found at sea by some vessel, perhaps yesterday, perhaps this morning. A boat was lowered from the ship, it reached the raft, the bonds of the young lady were cut, and she was taken aboard of the said ship, while the raft, left to itself, drifted on to St. David's."

This theory at once commended itself to Sir

Charles and the judge. Before the young man had ceased speaking a great change took place in their attitudes and features.

"The very thing!" suddenly cried the judge as he started to his feet and caught Harold to his breast. "What a mountain of sorrow you lift from my heart!"

He dried his tears on the instant, and a glow of joy and relief appeared on his pale features.

"He is my son Harold, my dear Cranston," said the baronet, with mingled pride and delight, as he bethought himself for the first time of the necessity of an introduction. "It has been at least ten years since you saw him, and in this time, of course, he has grown out of your recollection."

"And a worthy son he is!" exclaimed the judge, holding Harold at arm's length, and regarding him with eyes that beamed with interesting admiration. "How he has grown, as you say, since I last saw him! What a man he has become! Strange that the explanation he has so readily found never occurred to me. He has given me new life—dismissed all my sorrow. It is clear that Amy is still living and that it is merely a question of time when she will be restored to us."

In his joy the judge turned from the embrace of Harold to the arms of the baronet, and for a full minute the two old friends rejoiced in silence with each other.

"It is, indeed, merely a question of time," said Harold, whose thoughts were busy with the consequences that belonged to his theory. "The young lady may have been insensible at the moment of her rescue—and, indeed, this proposition is clearly indicated by the fact that she did not untie herself at the approach of the rescuers. That her condition was nothing worse than a swoon is evinced by all the considerations of the case—the weather, her strength and courage, the time of her rescue. Let us rest assured, therefore, that she is now safe on some vessel."

"Thank heaven for this hope!" murmured the judge, fervently. "It gives me new life! You have explained the whole matter, Harold—permit me to call you so—with singular clearness and precision."

"It is useless to speculate," pursued Harold, "what the ship is, or whether she is bound; but we may safely assume that Miss Cranston—"

"Call her Amy, my dear boy," interrupted the baronet. "We cannot allow you to be so formal and distant."

"Not a bit of it, my dear Harold," declared the judge, his face brightening still more. "Call her Amy."

"We assume, then," resumed Harold, "that Amy has recovered her consciousness in the course of the day, and has told her story to her rescuers. In that case all that remains for them to do is to bring her to these islands. The commander of the ship may possibly find it inconvenient to come immediately to us, but I incline to the opinion that he will not delay a minute in restoring Amy to her friends. I will even declare my firm conviction that this night will not be ended before we have news of her, or from her."

The judge drew a long sigh of relief, as did the Ex-governor, and both looked admiringly and affectionately upon Harold.

"It seems to me," replied the delighted baronet, "Harold's theory seems well founded."

Alas! for human theories and guesses at the truth. And alas! for the happiness that is so confidently based upon them.

As wisely as Harold had reasoned concerning the young lady's whereabouts, there was not a word of truth in his theories, as the reader is aware; and we shall see how utterly unsuspected was the plan arranged by an all-merciful Providence for the deliverance of Amy from her terrible perils.

"I see, Harold," continued the judge, "that your dear father has not told me half of your merits. From this moment I take you to my heart, and bestow upon you a father's affection."

Harold flushed with a crowd of emotions we will not pause to analyze, and hastened to reply:

"In that case you will grant me the favour that I am about to ask of you?"

"Most willingly. I promise beforehand."

"I beg you, then, to remain here with my father, hopeful and calm, while I take the whole question of Amy's whereabouts and return into my keeping."

"Harold is right, my dear sir," said Sir Charles, with all a father's pride and affection beaming in his eyes. "You are worn out, utterly exhausted, with all these fatigues and anxieties, and you need all the care and repose our friendship can offer. Harold has a complete knowledge of everything here, and can command all the resources of the islands; in short, can do everything that can be done in the matter. Rest assured that we will be prompt to bring you news of Amy, and believe me when I say, as an old friend, that it is your duty to accede to his wishes."

"I do—I do!" said the judge, with deep feeling. "Go, my dear Harold. I leave all to your zeal, and will place myself in the loving care of your father."

"While acting on your own theory, my son," said the baronet, "do not ignore any theory or suggestion that may be made to you. Your first movement, of course, will be to dispatch a zealous agent to every one of the posts. If you require the aid of soldiers or the police they are quite at our service, you know, since the late visitations. Perhaps you had better go to St. David's with a few soldiers, and take a look at the raft."

The judge suddenly started, with an exclamation of joy.

"Now that I think of it," said he, "permit me to say that the second boat of the Seabird may have encountered the raft and taken Amy from it."

"True—true!" cried Sir Charles, with a joyful agitation. "All promises well. Do not forget, Harold, to look after that second boat, especially if you go off to St. David's. The judge will tell me all about his own arrival, and I will look after the men who came ashore with him. Go, my dear son, and may the blessing of heaven attend you!"

"Amen!" said Mr. Cranston. "He will be hopeful and patient."

With this assurance he embraced the young man with a most fatherly air, accompanied him to the door, and watched his retreating form until it had vanished in the darkness.

"Noble youth!" he then murmured. "What a happy day it will be for us all when he becomes the husband of Amy! For several months past this marriage has been my dream, and it will henceforth until the wedding-day be my constant thought and occupation."

"Thanks, thanks, my dear judge!" replied the gratified father. "You have only to know Harold to love him. You should see his energy and ability. During the last two years of my official duties he took the burden of them on his own shoulders. Be assured that he will soon have news of Amy, if any power on earth can obtain it. The affection he already bears the dear child will quicken his zeal and his movements."

In this hopeful mood the two old friends returned to the drawing-room together.

"And dear Lady Mayne," said Mr. Cranston, "how is her health?"

"Very good, for her," answered the baronet. "She is quite an invalid, you know. I must prepare her to see you, my dear sir, while you dress for dinner. No tears now nor sadness. You must look only on the bright side of our shield, like the knight of old. Permit me to show you to your room myself, and inspire you with another hope or two by the way."

Arm in arm the two men, so long separated, left the apartment.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE OF COUNT MATTHIAS GALLAS.

—There has been discovered in a corner of the Clam-Gallas Library a packet of letters forming part of the original correspondence of Count Matthias Gallas during the Thirty Years' War. No less than 321 dated documents from the year 1633 to 1636, with a number of others belonging to the same period, but without dates, were among them. The most important among them are those of 1634, which, more or less, directly refer to Wallenstein. The spaces between the 2nd of January and the 1st of April, 1634, is represented by sixty-three letters from imperial generals—Medici, Suys, Piccolomini, Aldringer, Colerado, Marradas, and others to Gallas.

ROLL OF THE LORDS.—The rolls of the Lords, spiritual and temporal, in this second Session of the 19th Parliament of the United Kingdom contain 462 names, and there is one vacancy in the representation of the Peers for Scotland by the death of Lord Gray. A year ago the roll had only 454 names. The second name upon the roll of this Session is now, that of his Royal Highness Alfred Duke of Edinburgh. To the next name that of the Duke of Cumberland, there is still added the title "King of Hanover." There are several new names upon the roll. Sir Charles Wood has been created Viscount Halifax; Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, Lord Lytton; Sir W. Jolliffe, Lord Hylton; Sir Hugh Rose, Lord Straithairn; Colonel Pennant, Lord Penryn. The Earl of Caithness, Representative Peer for Scotland, has been made a Peer of the United Kingdom as Baron Barogill, and this honour has been conferred also upon several Irish Peers—Lord Clermont, Lord Athlumney (now Lord Meredyth), the Earl of Dunraven (Lord Kenry), Lord Monck, Lord Henniker (now Lord Hartismere), and Viscount Boyle (now Lord Brancorin). On the other hand, three Peerages have become extinct since the roll of last Session was made up—the Baronies of Bayning, Ponterby, and Glenelg. Two Peers who before only

ranked as Barons are now Earls—Lord Cremorne, who sat as Baron Dartrey, being now Earl of Dartrey, and Baron Wodehouse being Earl of Kimberley. Viscount Templetown takes his place as a Representative Peer for Ireland in lieu of the late Earl of Lanesborough. The Irish prelates on the rota this year are the Archbishop of Dublin, and the Bishops of Down, Ossory, and Cork. The Bishop of Chester is still the junior English Bishop, having, therefore, no seat in Parliament. There are other changes in the roll not affecting names or number; there is a new Lord Chancellor, a new Lord President, a new Lord Privy Seal, to take precedence of all except the Blood Royal and the Archbishops; a new Lord Steward, to take precedence of the Dukes, except the Earl Marshal; and a new Lord Chamberlain, taking precedence of all the other Earls.

FLOY.

CHAPTER I.

"FLOY, I love you. I want a wife who will be a help to me—one who is willing to economize, and not given to extravagance; for I have a fortune to make yet, and I cannot afford to waste money in the thousand-and-one fancy articles that so many ladies are indulged in by their husbands. I purpose to live within my income, and in such a manner that I can give to charities when I please. The question is, can you conform to my circumstances? I have loved you all my life I think, only my love is deeper and tenderer now. Will you be my wife?"

Ashley Stevens's plain face was flushed and almost handsome, made so by the eloquence and earnestness of his passion. He stood erect, in the pride of manhood, looking down upon her for his answer. The declaration was too business-like to please, not at all in the style of her favourite heroes of romance.

"No."

Her reply, abrupt, defiant, and revealing something of pique, angered him. He laid his hand on her shoulder.

"Floy Landon, I'd like to take some of the nonsense out of you, your false, strained notions of love and life—they don't make a holiday for us I can tell you. You have some common sense, or I should not love you; but they are so covered up by far-fetched views and feelings. You are undeveloped in mind, and you need the stern discipline of life to make a woman of you."

The girl was a picture as she listened. Her gray eyes looking out from long, curling lashes blazed with fire—throat and bosom were swelling, cheeks and brow were crimson, and her slender fingers pressed the back of a chair with a tense grasp that caused the blue veins to knot up like cords.

"If you think that is the way to win me, Ashley Stevens, you are vastly mistaken. You forget to be a gentleman."

"And you, Floy, forget to be a lady. I came and offered you the devotion of an honest heart. An honourable passion ought at least to be treated kindly though it be rejected firmly; but you flung it off in scorn. The time may come, Floy, when you will love in vain, which heaven forbid. If I had come to you booted and spurred, and won you in knightly guise, you would not have refused me; but, because I am prosy and humdrum, you won't accept me."

"I have been acquainted with you always."

"Exactly."

"I don't love you, and I won't marry you."

"That remains to be proved."

Ashley strode out of the room fiercely. In the hall he encountered her uncle. The old gentleman was kind and quick-sighted.

"What is the matter, my boy?"

No response.

"That obstreperous niece has been leading you a wild-goose chase, has she?—the more goose she. Come, be frank with me. If she has misled you I will disinherit her."

"She refused me."

"The minx."

"But I'll have her yet."

"Good. And I'll help you as far as my influence goes. She shan't have a penny of my money, unless she will marry you, and I'll tell her so."

"There will be no use in adopting that method. I am convinced she will not be driven or teased, to any considerable extent."

"What was the grounds of her objection to you?"

"She has been acquainted with me always. The truth is that I, and every living man, am far

below her ideal standard. I am not a prince in disguise, or a handsome and sentimental brigand. My proposal was not in the manner of a subject to his sovereign; and yet I love her in a rational way, quite as well as I do myself, honestly and reverently enough, heaven knows."

"She isn't worthy of you, my boy."

"Nay, but she is. It is false ideas that spoil her. In love, and married, her husband will find her true as steel, rich as gold, pure as snow, strong as iron, warm and tender. I have studied her, and know what she is capable of under proper development. She is worth too much to be thrown away, or to be lost without an effort."

"And you say you will marry her?"

"I will. I am blunt and not over well-looking; but I am better fitted to render her happy than any other I know, and she is better suited to me in character. I will not have my cup of happiness dashed aside, but I will quaff it foaming."

"How do you intend to proceed?"

"I need your co-operation to accomplish the desired end."

"Enlighten me in reference thereto, and command my services to the utmost."

Ashley Stevens and Floy Landon had been reared and educated together; he the stepson, she the orphaned niece of Mr. Thaddeus Landon. Ashley was six years her senior, and she had gone to him freely for all those little favours that good elder brothers are fond of doing for sisters. She quoted and revered him, as sisters do brothers they love; but her mind was diseased with the rainbow day-dreams common to imaginative young ladies who live much in retirement. The friction of practical life, of a real, recognized, awakened power of the heart was what she needed to round her character into true womanliness.

After this rupture Floy dreaded to meet Ashley; but she had mettle to carry her through more trying difficulties. Ashley treated her just as he had ever done, never by a word or glance indicating that anything unusual had passed between them. She heard no sighs from him, and she observed that his appetite was as good as usual.

"He doesn't care for me much, after all," she thought. "That is the way with the men of this age—all business. Love and marriage are mere business contracts. Oh! if I could have lived in the days of chivalry, of crusades and tournaments."

It is not natural for the sex, to want a man who has professed to love, let it all go so coolly and unconcernedly; and Floy's interest and curiosity were piqued. It irritated her pride, and forced her to think of him.

One evening at the supper-table her uncle broke forth, suddenly:

"So you are going to leave us to-morrow, my son?"

"Yes, the firm of Peters and Co. have offered me a fair salary, and a fine opening for advancement, in their house in Bombay."

"Going to Bombay?"

Floy laid down her fork in surprise, and looked quickly up. She couldn't quite hide the tremulousness of her chin.

"Yes; why not?" he asked, smilingly.

Pride came to her help in a moment.

"I don't know, I'm sure, only I don't see why I was not informed of your intentions before."

"I didn't think you would feel interested in the doings of a commonplace individual like myself."

He was cruel, and the cruelty made her wince. Her gray eyes, uplifted and misty, held a reproach. Shortly and silently she arose and passed out of the apartment. By-and-by she came back.

"How long shall you be gone, Ashley?"

"I don't know. My father's altered circumstances may make it necessary for me to remain abroad some years."

"Altered circumstances! What do you mean?"

"Then he has not told you that the M—— Bank has failed, and he has lost heavily thereby?"

"No."

"He may be able to keep his dwelling-house. I mean to bestir myself so actively that you both will have a comfortable support at least."

A slow flame mounted up to her brow.

"You may help uncle; but I ought to be able to take care of myself, and I can do it."

"Pray take no thought what you shall eat or what you shall wear, for I will see that you have what you need. Do you think I should be so mean as to sit idly down, and let the whole burden and care come on you?" he replied, with an intonation expressive of both pride and shame. "But what can you do,

you who have been reared so delicately and tenderly?"

"Look here, Ashley; heretofore there has been no occasion for me to exert myself; but because my energies have slumbered it is no indication that I have none. You have no faith in my ability and ambition; but I will show you that I am not that helpless and lackadaisical being you think."

She was palpitating, earnest, every muscle and nerve awake, and glowing for the battle of life. Its vicissitudes had roused her for practical action.

Ashley regarded her with new admiration.

It is a foolish poetical fiction that of the "vine and the oak," figuring the relations of woman to man. To retain his pure and lasting affection and esteem she must have enough stamina to stand of herself, and then the clinging will be very acceptable and agreeable; but, if she hangs like a "millstone about his neck," he comes to regard her as an encumbrance, and tires in body and mind.

"What do you purpose doing?"

"Teach drawing and painting."

"Doubtless you will meet with trying experiences—some of your old acquaintances may turn a cold shoulder to you."

"None will whose friendship is worth retaining."

"True; but you will feel the roughness, nevertheless."

"Let us turn to your affairs. You are going a great way from home?"

"Yes."

She paused, as if it were hard for her to go on.

"I treated you very shabbily the other day."

He bowed, made no comment, but his blood leaped along his arteries for joy.

"I hope we part as friends?"

"I hope so."

"As brother and sister, with kind feelings and wishes?"

"If you want it so."

"You leave early to-morrow?"

"Yes, Floy."

Her face was full of sweetness. The scarlet lips and curving chin quivered with the sorrow of parting. His impulse was to clasp her in his arms, but he restrained himself. She lingered a moment, and then turned to go.

"Good-bye."

"Floy?"

"What is it, Ashley?"

"Brothers and sisters don't part so coldly—kiss me."

There must have been other than fraternal magnetism in the caress, for it sent the tide of circulation in red waves up to meet the short curls that drooped over her brow. It had a subtle elixir for each. When she had gone a peculiar smile of triumph curved Ashley's lips.

"It works well—she loves me, and she shall confess it, too, some day."

Floy drooped a little after Ashley's departure, and an unwonted pensiveness that seemed almost like sadness possessed her; but she had a scheme for self-maintenance that must be carried out, and action soon made the roses bloom more brilliantly than ever on her cheeks.

The noble resolution of independence lent a new charm and elasticity to her port, that said directly to everybody—Here is a girl who can take care of herself. Uncle Thaddeus demurred, at first, to her project of teaching, but her eloquent persistence won him over to her views. The rebuffs she met with in her undertakings made her vexed, but they did not deter or dishearten her from her purpose. She succeeded in finding some dozen pupils among her acquaintances, which was a very good beginning; and she entered immediately upon her work.

There is nothing like the friction of action to render one healthy and happy, as Floy found. As the years rolled by they only the more perfected that beauty of soul that is radiated in the countenance in those changeable lights which no limner's skill has been able to put on canvas. She was a successful teacher, and her pictures acquired a reputation. Their sale became remunerative. And how fared her heart? Frequent manly and sympathising letters from Ashley kept up the electric invisible communications of soul with soul, so potent with those who have learned the divine mystery of love. It was the undertone of words, rather than the words themselves, that conveyed these spiritual telegrams.

CHAPTER II.

"FLOY, Mr. Canby is coming down to spend a fortnight of the warm weather with us," said her uncle, abruptly, one evening to his niece.

"Pray, who is Mr. Canby?"

"A former friend of mine, lately returned from an Eastern voyage."

"Ah!" in a very disinterested manner, picking up a trifle of worsted embroidery from her work-basket.

"Floy?"

"What is it, uncle?"

"You are a good-looking young lady."

"Turned flatterer so late in life!" smiling so as to show a row of even white teeth.

"You have run up someways into the twenties, and are unprovided for."

"What do you mean by being unprovided for?"

"Why, you have no husband, Floy."

A fall, resonant laugh rang out like a silver bell.

"Oh, uncle, I didn't know that you considered my estate a misfortune before."

"Well, all girls of common sense ought to be married—and you'll make somebody a good wife, Mr. Canby, for instance."

"Nonsense."

"I want you to be very pleasant and sociable with him."

"My dear old uncle turned match-maker!"

"I am serious, Floy. You don't know, perhaps, that Mr. Canby holds a mortgage on our home for five thousand pounds."

"He does?" she replied, sobering instantly.

"Yes, and he may foreclose."

"When was it given?"

"Five years since."

"Is it due?"

"It was due a year ago, but he has kindly waited upon me. I don't know how I am going to meet the payment."

"I have earned a thousand pounds you can have."

"He is unmarried, and wants a wife, I understand. You can pay the whole thing very easily—don't you see?"

"Uncle, please don't talk so. If he should want me for his wife, which is doubtful, I couldn't marry him."

"Why not? He is a good fellow, talented, agreeable, of unexceptionable family and unspotted reputation."

"But I cannot love him."

"How do you know till you have seen him? You didn't love Ashley—your heart is in your own keeping, to dispose of as you please?" eyeing her keenly. The colour in her cheeks flamed painfully.

"I'd rather stay with you."

"Promise me that you will try and like Mr. Canby. It would strain my old heart-strings more than they would bear if I have to leave the home of my boyhood."

"I'll try," she said, faintly.

Uncle Thaddeus was in the most rollicking good humour after Mr. Canby's arrival. Floy, under other circumstances, might have been pleased with the tall, dark man who proved a most genial and entertaining companion. He paid her particular and deferential attention from the first. His store of anecdote and general information was seemingly inexhaustible. He measurably succeeded in chaining her attention and interest; and, if her heart had been free, he might eventually have won it. As he became better acquainted his attentions became more pointed. At the end of a fortnight he offered himself and fortune to her acceptance.

"Will you share my joys and sorrows, be the light and attraction of my home, Floy?"

"I didn't want you to ask this question, Mr. Canby—I didn't mean you should."

"I had hoped differently. Can you not love me?"

"Save as a friend, I cannot."

"May I ask your reason? I love you, and it in a sense gives me a right to hope for a chance of winning your affection in return. Are you under any engagement to another?"

"No, sir," her long lashes suddenly sweeping her rich cheeks.

"Then time may lead you to look more favourably on my suit?"

"Though it is painful for me to do so, it is my kindest course to discourage your hope—I do not, never can give you my heart."

"Do not decide hastily. The moment you promise to be mine I'll give up the claim I have on your uncle's home."

"Do you think to bribe me into a union that, entered into on such a basis, would only be productive of unhappiness to us both?"

"But consider how painful it will be for Mr. Landon to remove from the roof that has sheltered him

from infancy. How can he meet his obligations to me?"

"You are not worthy to be my husband, Mr. Canby—you want me to do a great wrong to myself and you, and perhaps others—you want me to go to the altar when my heart is not mine to give. I am free to own it, that you may see my refusal of you is right and kind. For my uncle's sake I would love you if I could; but, if you have any magnanimity of character, you will not pain me by urging your suit any farther. If you will grant us an extension of time I think we can pay you all. Ashley is coming home in a month or two, and I am very sure the money will be forthcoming when he learns his step-father's indebtedness."

She was so excited and earnest that she was not at all astonished when he said:

"I became acquainted with this Ashley Stevens during my sojourn in India, and I, with my vast fortune and acquirements, am more than a match for him."

She was so incensed that she didn't observe the subtle gleam of mischief sparkling on his countenance.

"One of his little fingers is worth more to me than you and all your wealth."

"You love him?"

"Yes, I do."

"Bless you, Floy."

And he clasped her as if he had a right.

"Let me go," she said, flushing with conflicting emotions.

"Never, Floy, after such a confession. Look here;" and he threw aside false wig and whiskers, and stood forth his natural self, changed somewhat by climate, and the years which had intervened since he left.

"Not in India!"

"I came three weeks ago, and apprized father of the fact."

"You are a cheat."

"You said you loved me—I shan't forget that."

"What made you resort to such duplicity?"

"The end justified the means."

"I thought Ashley Stevens was not given to circumlocution."

"This is an exceptional instance. You needed a severe lesson, a practical waking up to the tender passion, to make a woman of you!"

"Take care."

"Will you be my wife?"

"To save you from resorting to another subterfuge, yes. But about that mortgage, Mr. Canby?"

"It was actually so—father insisted on my taking it, but it is cancelled now."

"Amen!" said Uncle Thaddeus, who had stolen silently upon the lovers.

And so Floy Landon was won at last. N. C.

EXODUS OF SPARROWS DURING THE CHOLERA.

A Swedish journal states that the thousands of sparrows usually frequenting the habitations were missed from their accustomed haunts during the cholera; and as the disease abated the birds were observed to return again. No doubt the coming of the little fellows appeared to auger a promise of health to the proprietors.

WEDDING IN SWITZERLAND.—The custom of making gifts to the bride prevails in Switzerland as everywhere, but it is better regulated. The bride makes out a list of things that she will require in beginning to keep house, especially those things that are over and above what would naturally be furnished by her friends, and one of them says, "I will give her this," and marks that as provided for; another will give her that, and sometimes two or three more will combine and furnish a more expensive present than any one would give alone. After the wedding the couple usually start off on an excursion, and on their return find their dwelling filled with these presents, each marked with the giver's name.

ANECDOTE OF LORD GRAY.—Lord Gray of Gray, whose death has caused so much regret, was one evening returning from his club, when he perceived the loss of his pocket-book, containing forty bank-notes of 1,000*l.* each (1,600*l.*). Lord Gray searched the pockets of his great-coat, but in vain. He quietly returned home. Next morning his servant went to his room at an early hour, and informed him that a lady in deep mourning wished to speak to him. Lord Gray desired that she should be shown into his drawing-room. "My lord," said his visitor, "you dropped your pocket-book containing 40,000*l.*; I bring it back to you." The voice was sweet and low, but so closely was the lady veiled it was impossible to guess the age or appearance. "Madam," replied Lord

Gray, "you have rendered me a service for which I heartily thank you. Allow me to ask if I may venture to offer you some remembrance of my gratitude?" The lady then hesitatingly confessed that she had recently lost her husband, whose death had left her the charge of three little children, and that so utter was her destitution that she had actually been tempted to keep the pocket-book. Lord Gray returned it to her, merely saying, "You are my creditor; you or your children will repay me later." Lord Gray received a visitor five years after this scene occurred, who appeared a total stranger to him. It was a lady. She handed him a velvet portmanteau, on which his cipher and coronet were embroidered in gold; within lay forty notes of 1,000*l.* each. "You will allow me to retain the old purse in memory of your munificent generosity," she remarked.

VIRGINIA.

CHAPTER I.

A GLORIOUSLY bright day in early spring. The ocean was unusually calm; but a pleasant sunshine broke up its greenish blue, and dashed its tiny ripples with the restless glory of quicksilver shimmering over crystal. Far away the waters lapsed imperceptibly into the pure atmosphere of the horizon, veiling the soft union with a gossamer haze exquisitely beautiful.

Not a sail was in sight—not a bird in the air. One great steamer moved through the calm of the waters, her broad white sails curving like the tired wings of a sea-gull, and her black pipes heaving forth mighty fleeces of smoke that curled, eddied, and fell apart in the wind, floating off in a soft film of silvery gray.

The steamer was full of life, cheerful and brilliant. Though not absolutely crowded, it had no room to spare, and all the luxury that could be introduced into a sea voyage was to be found on its decks that pleasant spring afternoon. Fur rugs and crimson cushions lay about in the shady places, occupied by men, women, and children, sitting low like Turks, if not exactly in the Oriental fashion. Camp-stools and a few easy-chairs were occupied with dreamy occupants, some reading, some chatting, and others sound asleep.

Perhaps four hundred passengers were on board, most of them of that idle upper class that comprises some of the weakest and also some of the most powerful members of social life in its ranks. They were in this case neither better nor worse than the crowd of people who usually cross and recross the Atlantic every season, as if it were some inland lake. Upon those fur rugs and cushions a few men, tired out with the active duties of life, sought that necessary reaction a sea life brings. There were merchants, clever men travelling for information—commonplace people killing time—sharpers on the alert for prey—adventurers, and, worse still, adventureses, forcing themselves, by craft or brazen assurance, into respectable society—with all the follies of that strange thing called fashionable life.

To this great majority were added one or two heaven-gifted souls to whom life, in itself, was an exquisite blessing. These found even that calm sea voyage full of wonderful poetry which the crowd never dreamed of. They saw glorious pictures in the sky as it bent over them—thrilling music in the soft heave of the waves which sent them steadily onwards, and still more varied interest in the life that moved and changed and worked itself out among the human beings with whom they were cast.

Of this class was the young girl seated on a white fur cushion, which was spread out on a shadowy portion of the deck like a snow-drift, half melted away, upon a ground-work of azure cloth scolloped and embroidered into a rich lacework border. She was a bright, happy-looking girl, with a face that Titian would have given a goblet of wine to paint, exactly as she then reclined, with her elbow resting on a pile of cushions, over which a shawl of blue cashmere, with a great deal of gold colour in the border, had been flung in rich drapery. Her head, with more glossy brown hair than most women possess, was supported by the palm of a white and finely shaped hand—not very small, for the girl herself was not petite.

Close by this pretty couch, which had an air of the Orient in it, sat a middle-aged man, rather handsome—very respectable—and at that moment closing his eyes in a dreamy way which might or might not be slumber. Something in the distance aroused the girl and caused the father to open a pair of mild blue eyes rather suddenly, for she cried out, in her quick, eager way:

"Look, look, papa!"

It was only a couple of sturgeons tumbling over

each other and leaping about in the sunshine, which for an instant scaled their backs with silver and kindled a little rainbow among the drops they flashed into the air.

"Isn't it wonderful, papa, that such awkward creatures can manage to display so much beauty?" cried the girl, resting one arm on her father's knee and raising herself upon the cushions that she might watch the gambols that anyone else might have disliked.

"Nonsense, my dear; we have seen a hundred of them tumbling about like salt-water pigs. Let me rest, do—this light affects my eyes."

"Well, sleep away, dear papa, if you like it best—I'll begin reading again, since you will have nothing to do with me."

This was uttered with a good-natured little laugh, while the young lady went back into her former position, languidly assumed her book, which had been lying half buried in the white fur, but she contented herself for a time with rustling the leaves as it lay in her lap.

With a smile on his lips the old man fell off into his sweet slumber again, and his daughter began to read. Just then a group of young persons came up from the cabin, chatting together and sending out little joyous bursts of laughter. The first that appeared was a young lady who was so complete a counterpart of the person we have been describing that a stranger would have glanced at the cushion at once to make sure that she had not left it.

The same lithe form was there, the same brilliant complexion, with eyes not altogether gray or blue, but which partook of either colour as fancy or passion warmed them. The hair was of that remarkable tint which even artists have failed to name properly, but which the Venetians painted in all its glory.

These traits, and more than these, the two girls had in common; no sisters ever looked more alike, or possessed the same grace of manner. That they were closely related no one could doubt who looked upon them, though one was quietly reading her book and the other appeared in all the ardour and joyousness of a spirited conversation.

"No, indeed," she was saying, "I make no pretence; I play well enough, perhaps, but it is my cousin whose voice you heard last night. There she is. Ask her."

She looked very beautiful standing there in the passage with a cashmere shawl gathered in careless grace around her, while the wind shook out the barb of Brussels point tied in a knot at the back of her little straw hat and fluttered the plume in front, giving a look of broomy cheerfulness to her appearance.

"Go ask her—or shall I?"

"You; you, of course," cried half a dozen voices; "she might refuse us."

Cora Lander walked across the deck, sweeping it with her robe of rich silk—far too rich for the occasion—and paused close by her cousin, who raised her eyes from the book she was reading with a pleasant smile.

"Virginia, dear, do come and pacify these good people with one little air. They heard that voice of yours last night in *ah che la morte*, and will not be content without the whole of it."

Virginia Lander dropped her book, and a bright colour came over her face, but this was all the annoyance that she expressed, though she felt much.

"Oh, yes, I will sing, if they wish," she said, quietly. "Come with me, Cora, and play the accompaniment."

The two girls went down to the cabin, and a brighter, lovelier pair you have seldom looked upon. It was not the prettiness of common beauty, which is in fact less effective than intelligent ugliness. But there was something unique, graceful and spirited which belonged to them alone, provoking inquiry and commanding admiration. Besides, one of them, the daughter of the old man dozing there on the deck, was heiress to every pound the millionaire possessed.

Cora Lander sat down at the grand piano in the cabin. Virginia stood by her side, and a merry group of young people swarmed around, eager for any amusement that promised to break up the monotony of sea-life, but so full of mirth that they could hardly keep quiet even for the music. A prelude—a masterly run over the keys—and then Virginia Lander's voice, full, rich and clear, broke forth, at first timidly and with a tremor of distrust in it, for she did not like this crowd of listeners. But even timidity cannot long hold true genius in thrall.

After a moment the colour came into her face—her lips parted, warm and red as coral, and out gushed the whole volume and force of her exquisite voice, thrilling the hearts that listened as music had seldom touched them before.

The depth, power and wonderful pathos of a voice cultivated to perfection charmed the crowd into will-

ing silence, which continued a full minute after the last notes left her lips. Then there were compliments—exclamations of delight from those who spoke only from the surface—and deep sighs of absolute ecstasy from such as understood and felt the delicious sweetness of her performance.

Virginia was pleased. Who is not by genuine admiration? She laughed a little nervously, blushed on seeing that many gentlemen had joined her audience, and retreated shyly to a sofa at some distance.

That moment you might have discovered where the difference lay between those two girls. It was in the expression. As Virginia drew back, half pleased, half ashamed of her own success, Cora let her white hands fall on the keys she had touched with such wonderful skill, and an expression came over her face that transfigured it completely. In all that buzz, hum and general outburst of praise she had had no part. Her touch, brilliant as it was, had been utterly overwhelmed by Virginia's voice. She sat a moment looking before her. Humiliating disappointment made her eyes almost black. Her lips curled in scornful redness, but the colour in her cheeks died out, destroying all the young brightness from her features.

This lasted a single minute, but during that brief time no one would have thought Cora Lander like her cousin Virginia, who had crept into a corner of her sofa abashed by the burst of genuine applause that followed her singing, but thrilled by the sweet exercise of her own genius which was in itself a delight.

For one instant the stormy look darkened on Cora's face, then, with an impulse which seemed inspiration, but which was defiance, she placed her hands across the keys and swept them with a power that hushed every voice in the room and turned the current of applause in her favour.

Virginia's face brightened beautifully at this outburst of approval. Always generous and sympathetic, she forgot herself utterly and came up to the piano radiant. Cora saw her, and with a proud lift of the head, dashed into a waltz which rang through the cabin like a silver war-trumpet, challenging hosts to action.

Half a dozen young ladies accepted the exhilarating appeal, wound their arms around each other, and whirled about with all the effervescence of happy youth. Cora cast a glance over her shoulder and dashed on, winging those light feet with melody. Away and around they flew, jostling each other, laughing at the fun, changing partners—making little mistakes, and sending their clear laughter through the music in a riot of sweet sounds.

Those who could not find room to dance applauded with hands and voice; those who could joined in, laughing at their less fortunate friends, till the whole cabin was one whirl of gaiety.

In the midst, piercing like an arrow through the laughter, came a cry from midships:

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

CHAPTER II.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" This withering cry stopped every pulse of life as it ran through the ship. For one awful second it held that crowd in the cabin motionless and pallid—pale as if a storm of ashes were passing over it. Some of the dancers kept their position, like statues, with scared faces.

Others staggered out of the whirl and clung together shrieking in each other's arms. Some crouched down in corners, pouring forth piteous cries. One or two laughed in a hideous mockery of their own fears, and a few weak voices joined in protesting that it was all a hoax. Still all listened, with hushed breath for a second cry which might be their doom.

Cora Lander laughed away the terror that came upon her, and tried to forget the awful scene with grand music.

It came again, that wild, desperate cry—deeper, hoarser, and still more terrible. A mad rush was made for the deck. The selfish instinct of life which levels men with wild beasts was uppermost then. The helpless and feeble were forced aside or trampled down, and through the tumult arose sobs and moans, with the low roar of half-smothered flames and gusts of black smoke that came rolling down the cabin stairs thick and stifling.

Virginia Lander sprang to the steps and rushed on deck, seeking for her father. Cora plunged into the frightened crowd, struggled through and followed her cousin, looking keenly around for some means of safety as she went.

The old man was on his feet, white as death, but with all his faculties clear. He held forth his arms as Virginia came up, and held her close, promising inwardly that they would die together. Cora placed herself by his side, pale with terror.

The steamer lay with her head to the wind, which swept the flames fiercely as they belched up the hatchway and ran along the cordage like sheet lightning. The captain gave orders through his trumpet which no one obeyed. Men rushed to and fro with buckets, and flow in despair to the pumps, but still the conflagration roared like a volcano in the iron hold, and leaped up through port-hole and hatchway, covering the sails with flame and creeping along the ropes till they shone out against the sky like a network of tangled fire.

It was awful to see human beings struggling up through the surges of hot smoke, and leaping into the fresh air one mass of flames. Now the scene became more terrible. Great gushes of fire came forth from the cabin and seized upon the woodwork around it. The mainmast, already girdled with flame and nearly destroyed, trembled like a forest tree beneath the axe. The ventilators were choked up with human beings, suffocated in a wild effort to escape certain death in the steerage. Now an effort was made to get out the boats, but they were seized upon and swamped by the frenzied rush of the crowd.

The wretched people retreated from bulwark to bow—anywhere that promised a moment's shelter. But the flames pursued them, leaping, hissing, slanting out from every chance of life. Some jumped overboard in sheer madness; others swung themselves down into the sea with chains and ropes, which might grow red hot or be burned under their grasp any instant. It was awful to see those panic-stricken creatures huddled together, shrinking, quivering, and white with a dread that was worse than death.

Mr. Lander and those two girls had kept their place firmly upon the deck, watching for some chance of safety, and only retreating towards the bulwarks step by step as the flames leaped upon them. The sails had burned out, and were now given to the wind in black patches of tinder. The cordage had broken up into rags of fire. The yard-arms were burning red and cutting against the sky, as if appealing to heaven for mercy.

Only a few moments more could those helpless creatures keep where they stood. Even now the boards under their feet were hot, and drops of turpentine came oozing out from all their pores, tempting the flames, which absorbed them with ravenous hisses. Not ten feet away the boards had parted, and they could look down on that sea of fire raging in the hold.

Virginia gave one glance and clung to her father, striving to shield him from the heat. Cora saw a thousand tiny threads of flame creeping towards them, and seizing upon the fur rug wound it about her, looking on the storm of fire as if she longed to defy it. She seemed like a priestess overwhelmed by her own incantations, leaning there against the bulwark, with that terrible light on her face, and the fur robe giving a savage aspect to her dress.

Just then a boat had been cautiously lowered by some of the hands—so cautiously that the terror-stricken creatures on the deck took no notice, for despair had paralyzed them. Cora saw it and she gained fresh strength. Without a word to the others she flung off her robe, leaped upon the bulwark, and plunged into the sea, twenty feet below. The boat had pushed off and was some yards away, but she was a good swimmer, and followed it, shrieking for help with every dash of her arms.

Had it been a man the sailors would have left him to die, for the boat was full; but there was something so strange and brave in the desperate effort this young creature made for life that they took her in with broken cheers and pushed farther off from the doomed vessel, from which men and women, with their garments one cloud of flame, were continually dropping.

Virginia looked up and saw that the place where her cousin had stood was empty, and uttering a cry of anguish, sprang to the bulwark.

"Oh, father! oh, heaven help us! She is gone—she is lost! No, no, thank heaven, thank heaven, she is in the boat. That is her. Look, father, look! That is Cora."

That moment the mainmast trembled like a tree cut through the centre and fell, dragging the steamer on one side by its weight. Then the engine broke, and the boiler collapsed with a dull sound, sending up a storm of hisses, as if ten thousand serpents coiled in its iron heart had suddenly crept into the flames.

The man at the wheel, who had stood firmly till now, retreated under a hot rush of fire, and leaped overboard, abandoning the steamer to her fate. Left to itself the doomed vessel, with its awful freight of fire headed to the wind, which gathered up the flames and hurled them in broad sheets and masses back upon the poor creatures who crouched upon the deck. They started up and rushed towards the bow dumb with horror. There they huddled together in a trembling crowd, turning their wild white faces on the sea of fire which raged behind them. Some crept out on

the bowsprit and clung to it. Others dragged articles of furniture with them, which they were lashing together as a forlorn hope.

Lander snatched up his daughter and followed with the rest. He too had seen the boat in which Cora had found safety, and knowing that Virginia could swim like her cousin, resolved that she should be saved.

When they reached the bow he took Virginia in his arms and kissed her with tenderness.

"Oh, father, this is terrible—must we die? Must we die?"

A great cloud of smoke swept over them and he held her face close to his bosom till it went by.

"Virginia, hear me."

She guessed what he was about to say, and cried out:

"No, no, papa—I never will—never without you."

"But, Virginia, my child!"

She clung to him wildly, desperately.

"But you can swim! The boat is not so far off," he pleaded.

"But you, papa, can you swim?"

Lander shook his head.

"Then I will not go! Better a thousand times die here together. What would life be without you?"

"Virginia, this is wrong. It is selfish."

"No—no—no, father! and if it be, heaven will forgive the child who wishes to live or die with her own father. See, I am not afraid. When the fire drives us away from here we will jump into the water together. I can swim for as both a little while, then, if we must go down, the Author of all will see how it was and let us be together again, for He alone knows how dearly I love you."

"My child, my child!"

The old man lifted her in his arms and was about to throw her over. She could swim, and alone, without incumbrance, might reach the boat. With him to drag her down it would be certain death.

She understood his design and clung to him with passionate tenacity.

"Father—father, I will not!"

"It must be. Heaven help us, child—it must, it must!"

"Not yet, father; not alone. I will not go alone."

She clung to him madly, turning her white face over one shoulder and watching the conflagration with frightened eyes.

"Oh, father, the wind is with us. See how it drives back the flames. But, oh, how that slow, cruel fire eats into the deck! How it grumbles and falls piecemeal into that red gulf! It creeps upon us inch by inch, and the space is so small now. Not yet! father, not yet! We have a few minutes more. Then we will go together—only so. Heaven is good to give us this chance of death without torture. Stand closer, close to the bulwark, father. How the poor creatures crowd! Yes, yes, we will give way for children, they must not burn. Poor mother—poor woman. Go first—go first—we can wait."

A tall, powerful man from the steerage, with an infant in his arms, was pushing by them, hurrying his wife and three children up to the charred bulwarks.

The children gave one glance into the depths below and covered back to their mother's feet, whimpering and sobbing in terror. The man placed the infant on its mother's bosom and took them both in his arms with solemn tenderness. The woman released herself wildly from his arms, and cried out:

"They are not all here. Brian! Brian! Oh, Father of mercies, where is my son?"

That instant a lad came across that skeleton deck, leaping from one blazing beam to another with the desperate energy of some wild deer breaking away from the hounds. His feet sent back a storm of hot sparks as they touched the seething wood. His woollen clothes caught fire, enveloping him in heavy gushes of smoke.

He gained the last beam with a staggering leap—recoiled dizzily, and was plunging head foremost into the gulf of fire yawning for him, when a single cry sent strength back to his heart. His mother's voice reached him through the roar of the flames and drove away weakness from brain and limb. With a desperate bound he landed by his father's side, quivering from head to foot.

His hands were scorched, his hair was crisped, and a deadly whiteness showed itself through the smoke and ashes which blackened his young face. He struggled to speak, but his chest only heaved and the parched upper lip curved away from his teeth, giving his mouth a terrible look of agony. His eyes were uplifted to his father's face, beaming with pity, despair, and such courage as the hero feels when he leads a forlorn hope on the battle-field.

He spoke at last, and his voice was like the cry of a wild eagle.

"Father, let me go first. Heaven has saved me for that!"

The father turned and looked upon him almost with a smile on his lip.

"It will give them courage, father. Mother—mother, it is only a moment's pain. Kiss me, mother, for I must go."

He flung both arms about his mother and the infant. He kissed the quivering face of the woman, the wondering eyes of the babe, seized his father's hand for an instant, and clambered up the bulwark.

A feeble hand caught at his clothes and a wild voice cried out:

"Brian, Brian, take me, take me; I cannot climb up alone!"

This was the eldest girl, who grasped eagerly at his burning jacket. The lad sprang back, took her in his arms, and tried to lift her up the bulwark.

"Yes, Helen, we will go together—you and I."

He gained the narrow ledge of wood, and was dragging her up, when a lurch of the half-burned wreck broke his hold and sent him headlong into the deep; she fell back upon the deck, moaning.

Then the man turned to his wife, who shook so violently that the babe almost fell from her grasp.

"One has gone—Mary—Mary!"

It was all he could say. The words died upon his lips, but his eyes looked out upon the water with an awful meaning.

The white-faced, frightened creature understood him and held the child close. She lifted her cold lips ineffectually for the last death kiss, but he had no power to give it. The whiteness of his face met hers one moment and was withdrawn again.

Then, with his strong arms shaking like reeds, he lifted her upward and loosened his hold. Twenty feet below there was a break in the water, a flash, and the child's cry of an infant, but the sounds were faint and lost in the roar of the flames.

The man bent forward to look over, but his heart failed, and, with desperate calmness, he selected the smallest child left in that trembling group—a little, chubby girl—and lifted her to the bulwark. One instant those great, quivering hands rested on her head—then came the gleam of a baby face against the black side of the vessel, a flash of soft hair in the wind, and scarcely a ripple followed to tell where the little creature fell. Another—and then the last of the flock stood, white and still, while the wretched father blessed her as he had sanctified the others.

She was the oldest of four girls, something more than a child, but the most helpless of them all, for the girl was hunchbacked and dwarfed, but it was the quiet, calm face of an angel that looked up into those agonized eyes.

"Good-bye, father—I am not afraid."

The words were on her lips when she dropped from under the benediction of his hands, and now all was gone. Of a large family the father stood alone. He turned that hard white face upon the spot where his little brood had stood, looking yet for another. Then came a look of vague bewilderment, followed by the truth, sharp and quick. With one strong cry of terrible anguish his arms were flung upward and he plunged overboard.

Virginia and her father saw all this, and their souls grew strong within them. What had they to give up compared to the awful duty which this man had performed? How patiently, and with what meek faith that woman had gone down to her death! It seemed a little thing for them to die with each other. After such heroism Mr. Lander knew that Virginia would stay by him to the last, and forebore to urge her farther. So long as there was a chance of life on the vessel they would seek it together, when that was gone a plunge and all would be over.

But their time grew short now. The fire was burning fiercely towards them. Every instant narrowed the space which was even now overcrowded with human life. Each minute some unhappy wretch was thrown overboard, as the crowd pressed closer and closer to avoid the burning death that seemed ravenous for every human life on board.

"Lift me up to the bulwark, father; if there be a hope of life let me search for it."

Mr. Lander lifted her up to the charred bulwark, and held her there with desperate firmness. She leaned forward and gazed through the eddying smoke upon the sea—praying for a sail—praying for help—nothing was in sight except a few struggling creatures in the water—the boat drifting to and fro at a safe distance, with Cora Lander in it, and a frail raft on which two or three desperate men were working hard to keep above water. Beyond this she saw one or two boats drifting keel upwards—and that was all.

From this hopeless waste of waters she turned to the vortex of fire raging beneath her—turned with thrills of terror that made the very heart shudder in her bosom.

It was an awful sight!

The great ship lay seething in the water more than

half consumed, a skeleton of fire preying on itself. The light wood-work had flashed out with vehemence and sunk to a sea of fiery smoke in the hold. Except a few miserable feet at the prow, nothing was left but a mighty cradle of red-hot iron, ribbed and beamed and braced with such massive strength that fire itself seemed incapable of destroying it.

Huge beams, stormy sparks with every sweep of the wind, spanned what had been the deck from bulwark to bulwark. Great crooked ribs of solid fire curved down to the engine, which lay massive and inert—its iron heart pulseless—its mighty arms paralyzed—its boiler a hollow ball of iron, and all its wonderful mechanism a vast heap of white-heated metal.

Virginia Lander recoiled from this fearful sight, and sank back into her father's arms shuddering.

"There is no hope," she said. "The fire is working this way and undermining us. Anything is better than a death like that."

"How near?" questioned the old man.

"Heaven may give us half an hour."

"Even in that time we may obtain help," said the father, bending over her with yearning tenderness. "Oh, my child, when I think of your young life going out so early I am a coward."

"No, no, father; after looking down into that awful gulf of fire death in the cool waters seems bliss to me," said Virginia.

That moment a portion of the deck on which they stood crumbled in, and a column of flame shot up close to them. Two or three women, mad with fright, leaped overboard, their faces marble, their garments one mass of fire; others sank with fragments of the deck in the burning hold and were lost before a sound of anguish could tell of their fate.

Nearer and nearer those doomed ones came the stifling death—not a foot of safe timber was left. On the very edge of that hollow cradle of fire they stood, clinging together for the last time.

Now a slender dart of flame shot up between the warped boards on which they stood. Still they clung closer to each other, shrinking away from it.

CHAPTER III

"FATHER, our time has come."

Virginia Lander spoke gently, and in a calm voice, but her face was white as snow.

The father bent his colourless face to hers, kissed her on the forehead, and wound his arm around her.

"Heaven have mercy upon us," broke from his white lips.

"Oh, heaven, save him!" trembled upon hers.

They would have gone quietly over, but a dozen others, stricken with fresh terror by this sudden outburst of flame, rushed over them and separated the father from his child. It was like a rush of wild animals, trampling each other to death. A whole crowd were hurled into the deep at once, blackening the waters one horrible minute and sinking into eternity the next.

Virginia Lander was borne down with the rest, but she rose up again, crying out as her head reached the surface:

"Father—father—father!"

No answer! Men were sinking all around her, but among all those struggling creatures she could not see him. She supported herself on the water, shrieking as each man went down with a maddening fear that it was her father whose death she witnessed. Then, as the waters swallowed up those toiling wretches one by one, she commenced swimming up and down the black hull of the vessel, pleading with those who hung by the chains and ropes to tell her if they had seen him fall.

A sweet voice from one of the trailing ropes answered her at last:

"I saw him come down close by the bow," it said; "he fell with the great crowd."

It was the hunchbacked girl, up to her neck in water, clinging to a rope.

Virginia struggled for the rope, and seizing upon it, dragged herself up halfway from the water, searching right and left for that one face. She dropped at last, bringing the girl with her. But for this she would have sunk without a struggle, weighed down by despair. The child gave a sharp cry and seized the rope again with a last instinct of life.

While lifted above the water Virginia had seen the boat lying at a safe distance, with her cousin in it. She held the girl up, seizing the rope again.

"Lay your hand on my shoulder; hold firmly, but do not pull me down," she said. "We will try for the boat. Are you afraid?"

"No."

"Cling to me, then; do not struggle—one moment—he may be floating yet."

She lifted herself out of the water again and made a last despairing search for her father. Then, with a moan, she sank down and told the hunchback how to fasten both arms around her.



[THE RESCUE.]

The girl obeyed without a word, and with her wild eyes fixed upon the boat that frail girl gave herself up to the deep, burdened with another human life. Slowly and firmly her delicate arms clove through the water. Her wild eyes were fixed on the boat, which lay motionless beyond the fiery glow of the flames. How cool and quiet it looked. That one dark spot was life to her, all the rest a grave.

It was wonderful how strong and self possessed she was. That other life clinging to hers inspired her. She could have sunk, herself, without a moan; but that helpless soul, she must bear her to a place of safety. While heaven gave her strength she would use it. So she moved steadily on, growing weaker and weaker, but slowly nearing the boat.

When Cora Lander saw that face rising above the water she gave a cry, which the struggling creature heard, it was so sharp and ringing.

"Take up the oars! Take up the oars! Pull off! pull off!" she cried out to the men.

The men, who had been watching this brave girl struggling towards them, snatched their oars and pushed forward to meet her. Cora seized one of them fiercely by the arm.

"Not that way—are you mad? They will be upon us like sharks. How many boats have you seen swamped before your eyes? Back—back, I say, and out to sea! We are laden too much already—another would sink us!"

The man shook her off with horror. He had been one of those whom her music had entranced only a few hours before, and thought that the two girls were sisters.

"Bear away towards the ship, one and all," he cried. "See that head in the water with its trail of hair, and the other face behind. They shall be saved if I go overboard to make room."

Some human hearts are full of good impulses, say what you will. Every manly arm in that boat gave its strength to save those sinking girls.

"Pull on; pull away—see, she wavers; her strength is gone—great heaven, they will sink, and we so near!"

Cora half started up in the boat, white as death, but with anxious expectation in her eyes.

"Keep up, keep up—hold on another minute, and we are with you," shouted the generous young fellow, while the oar bent under his strong arm and the boat plunged forward like a tired race-horse.

That brave girl heard the cry, and made another feeble effort to sustain herself; but the hunchback hung heavily upon her, and she felt herself going.

"It is me—it is me—I am sinking you," cried the

sweet voice, and the slender arms loosened their hold.

"No, no," arose from the lips of the noble young creature as the tightness was removed from her neck. "Clasp tighter—tighter—heaven is giving me new strength."

But the girl dropped away in silence, sank, and rose again close by the boat, which came up slowly. An oar was thrust out for her. She seized it and was dragged in half suffocated.

A lock of human hair, weltering like seaweed in the water, was all that could be seen of Virginia, who was sinking. The passenger who had taken command leaped overboard, gave a plunge and brought her up senseless.

"Make room," he cried, lifting her up to the hands stretched out to receive her. "Heaven help us, she may be dead!"

"No," said that sweet voice once more, "heaven would not let her die so. Put her head in my lap; she shall have some of my vitality."

The hunchback struggled up to a sitting posture in the bottom of the boat, and they laid Virginia's head in her lap, while the man who had saved her took a travelling-flask of brandy from his pocket and poured some of it through those white lips.

"Is she better—will she come to life?" cried Cora Lander, bending over her. "Does that blue around her mouth mean death? She is my cousin, and I have a right to know."

"She is not dead," answered the hunchback, looking up. "With my hand here I can feel her heart stir."

The strange creature had forced one of her tiny hands under the wet garments that lay heavily on Virginia's bosom, and found her heart fluttering with faint thrills of life—so faint that a rude hand might not have discovered them.

"Cora took up one of her cousin's hands and began to chafe it in her own, stopping now and then to feel if there were a pulse in the wrist.

"You feel anxious now," said the passenger who had saved that young creature. "Still, if we had listened to you she would have been dead long ago!"

Cora lifted her eyes to his face with something like defiance.

"How could I know that it was my cousin?"

"As I did from the first; sister or cousin, I scarcely know which, the likeness is so great."

"But I did not dream of it."

"Still she was a woman struggling for life," replied the man, forcing a few more drops of brandy

between the lips, which had parted a little, but were yet without colour.

"Man or woman, I had no power of knowing," was the half-reproachful answer. "I, who am short-sighted."

"But you seemed to be the first one conscious of her struggles to reach us."

"You are unkind—almost rude, sir. I saw a crowd of black objects plunging down the sides of the vessel and coming this way. How could we withstand them? If I begged you not to let them swamp us, was that so very unfeeling? But you have saved my dear cousin, and I can forgive all."

"See, her lips move—she stirs," said the low voice of the hunchback once more. "Let us thank heaven and be still."

Cora crouched down by her cousin, sobbing piteously.

"Oh, Virgie, dear Virgie, open your eyes and say if I deserve all this man has been saying. I, who love you better, a thousand times, than myself. Cousin, cousin, do you hear me?"

The hand which she was chafing clasped itself feebly around her fingers, and a low, gurgling murmur died away on those lips. Then the soft gray eyes opened, and, dazzled by the sunbeams, closed again.

"Is it you, Cora?"

"Yes, cousin—yes, we are safe now."

"And—and father?"

No one answered her. She waited awhile and a spasm of pain crept over her.

At last she spoke, very, very faintly:

"Is my father here, Cora?"

"No; we have not seen him!"

Virginia fell back heavily on the hunchback's lap. At last two great drops came out from her closed lashes and rolled slowly down her cheeks. She did not mention her father again, but lay still while the sunset came and went, leaving the waters purple around her.

The boat had drifted slowly off from the burnt ship, which lay a smouldering heap of blackness upon the ocean, a few human beings desperately clinging to the bowsprit, which could be seen cutting blackly against the sky. But Virginia Lander had no courage to look at the mournful spectacle, and the boat, with its freight of human souls, drifted slowly out to sea. The night closed in upon them with warmth awhile, then deepened into a black void, with one fiery spot burning like a red-hot coal through the chaos. That one glow of fire was the burning ship.

(To be continued.)



[EVANGELINE.]

GOLDEN FAVOURS.

CHAPTER I.

"Stop, sir! Take care of your horses; you will run over this old gentleman!"

These words were pronounced in a clear mellow voice that rang out distinctly from the clatter and clamour of a crowded street, and a slender, lithe young boy rushed before the champing horses of a carriage, and dexterously extricated a feeble, wavering, sinking figure.

"This way, sir. Take hold of my hand and wait for that cab to pass on. There, now we are all right. It's an ugly place to cross. The policemen ought to be on the watch. Good-morning, sir."

"Stop!"

The tone was feeble, but the accent authoritative. It brought Hal Halstead to a sudden stop just as he was plunging into the crowd again. He turned round and looked at the pallid, cadaverous face of the old gentleman with curiosity.

"Maybe you want a paper, sir," he said, doubtfully, trying to pull out the bundle from under his arm.

"I want to talk with you. Come with me to the bench over there."

He pointed towards the park, where cool walks and shaded seats might well tempt the loiterer on that dusty summer's day.

"You're nervous after the fright. It's no wonder, certainly. Well, sir, I'll take you over there safely, and when you're rested it will be all right. But I mustn't stop long, for I've got my papers to sell," said the boy.

"Never mind your papers," replied the old gentleman, brusquely.

Hal whistled as he thought:

"That's cool in the old gentleman! I wonder what would become of mother and me if I didn't mind them."

But he led the way carefully to a broad seat beneath a noble old elm and saw his companion seated upon it, quietly watching him when he removed his somewhat worn white hat, and wiped the drops from his wrinkled forehead.

"You were a little frightened," said he, presently, alarmed at the paleness of the worn, thin face, and without waiting for an answer he ran off to one of the drinking-fountains and brought back the tin cup glowing with the cool water. He was evidently extremely grateful, for it was drained to the last drop.

"You are a kind-hearted boy," said the old gentleman as he returned the cup; "what's your name?"

"My name is Henry Halstead, sir. 'Lion Hal,' my companions all call me."

"What is that for? for I am sure that you do not claim for yourself the lion's share, or his lordly rule"—and the little sharp gray eyes peered earnestly into his face—"Nor you would not let the horses run over a poor, feeble old man. You're a fine, promising lad. Now tell me where you live."

Hal coloured as he named the street and number, but he spoke proudly.

"It's a poor place, sir. I feel it most for mother's sake, for we've been used to better things; but it's the very best I can do at this time. I must get money enough soon to try some other business."

"Where's your father?" was asked, abruptly.

"He has been dead two years, sir. He was a carpenter, and the staging gave way and let him down. It caused his death, though he lived three months after. There's only mother and me now. But mother has got weak by taking care of father."

"And you are her support and staff, eh? There's the right kind of feeling in you, I shan't forget this meeting, and I don't believe you ever will. I have been ill, and I thought to come to this place for a little fresh air. I didn't think there would be such a change in me. I am weak and feeble, lad, weak and feeble."

The tone grew wonderfully tremulous.

There was a wistful, appealing look on the sickly aged face which touched the stout, healthy boy with pity and sympathy.

"I am sorry. I hope you will get stronger. If it were not for my papers, I would wait and go back with you."

"That is right; business must not be neglected. Let me see. How much is your whole stock worth to you?"

"These are worth five shillings, sir. I hope I shall sell them all, but—"

"You are not afraid the sharper fellows who don't stop to look after feeble old men and helpless little children will get your custom?"

While he spoke the wrinkled hand was busy in his pocket. It emerged presently, clutching a well-worn pocket-book. The nervous fingers selected ten shillings.

"There," said he, in a tone of satisfaction, "there are ten shillings for you. I am going to buy your whole stock at a premium, and you shall take the papers, and pilot me home at the same time."

"But, sir, you're giving me too much, and I haven't any change," stammered Hal Halstead.

"It's all right. It's worth the extra to have extricated me from under those trampling hoofs, don't you think so?"

"But I can't take pay for that," answered the boy, stoutly. "I should always be thinking in future about getting money for such deeds, and it would spoil me."

"I don't think there's much danger. Well then, supposing we take it another way. Five shillings are for the papers, and the other five for getting a poor, helpless man like me to his home again. We'll sit and talk and rest awhile, then we'll make a start. How do you like the proposition?"

"It's very well for me, sir. But it's too much for you to pay."

"I can do it, seeing that I shan't have my doctor's bills to pay."

Hal had been quietly taking an inventory of the speaker's wardrobe, and was inwardly thinking:

"What a queer old man! He can't be worth a great deal and wear such coarse clothes."

"It would be nice though to be worth plenty of money, wouldn't it?" said the old gentleman, following his eyes and divining something of his thoughts.

Hal's handsome young face glowed with the very thought.

"What would you do if you had money?"

"Oh, such a lot of things. I'd go to college. I'd have dear, patient, darling mother have all her heart's desire. I'd make everybody happy. Tom Brindley should have new clothes to go to Sunday school, and pretty Nanny O'Brien have plenty of blue ribbons and white frocks."

The old man looked into his face in surprise.

"What," said he, slowly, "have you no tastes of your own to gratify? Is your money to be spent for others?"

"I haven't the money yet. I've got to earn it. But isn't that the best thing about money that it will help to make other people happy?"

There was no answer as the clear, frank eye looked earnestly into the grave face.

No wonder. This was a strange, unnatural thought for one whose life had been spent in heartless selfishness, in grasping avarice. He stared at the boy, repeating:

"No good in money except for others? You will not believe in that doctrine when you have once become possessed of money."

"Then I hope I shall never have any," answered Hal, bluntly.

"A strange lad," muttered the old man. But his face brightened up in a moment. Across the wide, wide chasm, deepened more by alienated thoughts and divergent habits than even by the many busy years between, he thought of his boyhood, and recalled a text again and again impressed upon him by his mother's gentle voice. He still held the same spirit and enforced the boy's doctrine.

"You are happy, I suppose?" said he, in a low tone.

"Oh, yes, always happy, except when I have a bad day's work and mother has to stint her supper because of it. I like the world, it has used me pretty well after all."

"What?" demanded the old man, staring at him in deeper amazement than ever.

There arose a little blush to the broad, tanned forehead, but the eye was clear and fearless.

"I say I am not unhappy now afraid, because I know heaven will take care of me as long as I try to do its will and obey its laws. I know very well what is sinful. No one has to tell me I must not lie or steal. I see, too, that I must be mother's protector, to earn a living for her. Whatever comes in my way to be done, if I can, I shall do it."

Happy boy. He stood looking into the hard, ironical face, having preached his little sermon with an eloquence of conviction far beyond the power of many an elaborate discourse given forth to a crowded congregation.

The face of the old man changed. The hard lines were unbent, the cold meer vanished, even a tender mist crept into the sharp, worldly eyes.

"Your mother taught you that. Try not to forget it, boy," he said, presently, in a husky voice. "My mother was just such a woman, but she has been dead twenty-five years. And I have not remembered much of her counsel. Heaven forgive me."

He sat there in silence, his head drooping, his eyes cast down. What sorrowful, sorrowful thoughts were with him frank-hearted, innocent-minded Hal could not understand, but he took a seat on the bench and did not interrupt him.

It was pleasant enough sitting there and waiting. The boy congratulated himself that he had no need of fretting about the sale of his papers, and enjoyed the shade in his own fashion. The bustle and rattle of the street came to them, but like the far-off roar of the ocean, it did not vex or disturb. The leaves rustled lightly over their heads, and seemed to be whispering some pleasant story. The few pedestrians in the nicely kept walks moved indolently, and were not near enough to cause any annoyance.

"How nice it is here. I will bring mother over to-morrow, if I get out early," soliloquized he.

Presently his eyes sparkled. A pretty little girl in charge of her nurse came tripping down a walk, throwing a ball to a snowy-fleeced poodle-dog, with a blue ribbon around his neck. It was a pleasing picture, and Hal watched it closely.

"What a pretty hat that is with all those flowers for a wreath. The little miss looks like a fairy, but I know who would be handsomer still. My! how I should like to be rich enough to buy little Nannie O'Brien such a one. How her curls would fly and her blue eyes sparkle. Poor little Nannie; it will be a long while before she will have a maid to follow her."

Hal suddenly sprang up and darted to the rescue of the poodle. A great dog had pounced upon the helpless little playfellow of the pretty child.

The poodle uttered a succession of sharp yells, the little girl cried, the maid shrieked, but valiant Hal rushed forward, and imprinted a heavy blow upon the aggressor's face.

The poodle ran limping to his little mistress, and the dog went shrinking out of sight. Hal quietly returned to the bench, where the old man, aroused by the noise from his meditations, had watched the whole scene.

"Another thing which has come in your way to be done, eh?" said he. "Well, to be sure, it's something to have your eyes open. Come now, let us be going."

"You are still weak," said Hal, and he saw how feebly his companion stepped; "take hold of my arm, sir. You may lean as heavily as you please."

"Yes, I am weak. My strength is all gone. It will never come back again. Never. I know it well enough."

There was a bitter melancholy in the voice that made the boy shiver.

"You are right to be happy, Hal. You so young, and strong, and fresh, with life glowing and beautiful before you. But I—oh, I have trodden all the paths; my history is written; there are only a few steps farther. Don't you pity me? Don't you grieve for me, boy; you whose heart is alive to the sorrows of others?"

"I am very sorry," stammered Hal; "but—"

He stopped short, as if conscious the words he in-

tended to speak were unsuitable to the person before him.

"But what?" demanded the old man.

"I was only thinking of my father, sir. It was very hard for him at first. It is only very wicked, ignorant people who believe that the grave is all. The Bible shows that it is but the door through which to enter the life that has no ending and no death."

The thin, attenuated hand grasped his arm in an unconscious agony which made him shrink.

"Boy, boy, I have secured my ships and property, my life even is insured, but my soul—oh, heaven help me! my soul is drifting out on this unknown ocean of eternity without the slightest insurance."

The spare frame shook with a spasm of anguish. Hal was horrified and frightened. He could not speak a word.

Just then a crowd was waiting for admission to the horticultural show. Two or three well-dressed ladies were impatient and indignant, and pushed through the passing crowd. The sudden lurch threw a poor old apple-vendor, who was on the outside of the walk down into the street. The basket dropped from her arm, and apples and oranges dropped into the dirt. Hal hung an indignant glance at the ladies, but his compassion hastily upon a flight of steps, and darted to the relief of the whimpering old creature. He gathered up all within his reach, wiped off the dirt with one of his papers, smashed a green orange's roughish urchin-had pilfered, and in a trice had the apple-vendor in a respectable condition, considering the amount of damage.

"Here's a good lad, and clever-spoken. May all the saints bless ye!" said the poor creature, while she held out to him the biggest orange. "You take this now, just to place the old woman."

"Thank you, but you'd better keep it. It will help make up your loss, for it's the finest one you have."

"Oh, ye're the clever lad, ye shall take the orange. I'm in bad luck to-day. I left the children sick, or I had been after waiting this hour back."

Hal's companion had made his way from the steps as the crowd dispersed. He came towards them at this speech with his hand in his pocket.

He drew it forth—oh, it was a hand familiar enough with greedy grasping, but strange to charity until this day. He thrust it into the boy's hand.

"Give her that, lad. If her children are ill she ought to be at home taking care of them."

Hal saw that it was half-a-crown, ere he laid it in the bewildered woman's palm with his bright and happy smile.

"There, there, Goody. This kind gentleman means you shall not consider it an unlucky day. Return to the poor little sick ones as fast as you can, you won't make half as much."

After this they walked on silently. Only when they reached the doorway of the substantial but unpretending-looking brick building, which the old man had pointed out as his home, Hal said, in a slightly tremulous voice:

"You may certainly look upon such days as these, sir, as something towards insurance."

The tremulous hand was laid lightly on his head.

"I am glad that I went out to-day, my boy, glad that I met you. Keep your papers. If you can sell them do so. And do not forget your mother's teaching; never let business, or prosperity, or trouble harden that kind, obliging spirit of yours. Tell me your name and street, once more."

Hal did so, looking up into the worn face which had not till that moment struck him as so utterly feeble and ghastly. There was a mingled awe and grief in his voice as he added:

"Good-day, sir; I shall never forget you."

"No, my boy, you will not. Profit by my example," was returned, solemnly.

A man-servant came out then, and assisted the old man up the steps.

Hal walked slowly and thoughtfully away. He sold his bundle of papers, bought a nice treat for supper, not forgetting a few seed-cakes for little Nannie O'Brien, and astonished his mother by rushing in upon her full two hours before his usual time, singing at the top of his voice by no means feeble voice, which sound brought down from his mother's room little Nannie, eager to share his joy, and bask in the sunshine of his delight, which was to the poor little starveling's fancy like the gracious condescension of a monarch.

Hal took the little girl into his arms, made her kiss him thrice, and then rewarded his great generous heart by the sight of her delight as she peeped into the paper and discovered the treasure there. Then while Nannie, with her curly head against his shoulder, munched away at the cakes, Hal told the story of his meeting with the old gentleman, and produced the extra five shillings, declaring that one shilling must go towards getting some more cough-

syrup for the poor, wasting, consumptive mother of Nannie. They were so happy over the circumstance Hal said, eagerly:

"I hope I shall see him again to tell him how much good he has done us, he seemed to feel so forlorn and sorrowful about himself."

But Hal did not see him again. He came home from his work, about a fortnight after, with a very grave face, and there was almost a sob in his voice as he said:

"Oh, mother, I have been in that street to-day, and there was a hearse at the door of that old gentleman's house. And I asked a man about it, and he is dead. And he has never been out since that day I took him home. Oh, mother, I could not help thinking of him with that strange, sorrowful look, and it was so pitiful I felt like a mourner."

But as he poured forth these words in breathless eagerness, Hal suddenly broke down with a great flood of tears.

The boy's tender, impassible heart was deeply affected. His mother drew him tenderly to her breast.

"My son will remember his words and profit by his example," said she, gently, as she wiped away his tears.

"He was very rich, mother. They told me his name was Abbot Allen. I was in hopes to meet him again some time."

While they spoke a knock came at their door, and as Hal opened it a well-dressed, gentlemanly person walked in with the air of a man who had business, and a right to be there.

"Good-afternoon, young sir. How do you do, madam? I am a lawyer, the lawyer of the late merchant Abbot Allen, from whose funeral I have just returned. I have come to request your presence at his house to hear the reading of his last will and testament."

These words were spoken in a business tone, which took away half the meaning for the listeners. Mrs. Halstead turned a little pale, and arose from her seat. The boy stared at him half angrily, and said at once:

"We don't know what you mean, sir, nor what business we have in that house."

"You are Henry Halstead, son of James Halstead, deceased, and Mary Halstead, now widow. You are the boy who met Mr. Allen in the street and saved him from being run over by a carriage, and brought him home," replied the lawyer, more deliberately.

"That is all true, sir."

"Then put on your things and come along; there's a carriage waiting outside for us."

"But, sir, this is very perplexing. If you could explain it might save us some alarm," said Mrs. Halstead, still very pale.

"The boy then is mentioned in the will! He must be present, you understand, as well as you, his natural guardian, at the reading of the will."

"We will go at once," said Mrs. Halstead, quickly. Hal stood with quivering lips.

"He was very kind to me. He has given me something to remember him by. But I did not need it. I told him I should not forget him."

"He has left you, I suppose, what may be a trifle out of so large an estate, but any sum will be like a little fortune to us," added Mrs. Halstead, wrapping her faded shawl round her with trembling hands.

The lawyer rubbed his hands, glancing around the neat but barely furnished, dingily papered apartment.

"Yes, madam, a trifle, hem, a trifle. Well, I should say it may not come amiss."

Then they drove to the house. There were but few waiting there in the dim, solemn-looking library. The lawyer seated Mrs. Halstead, and drew forth the will at once and commenced reading. But as if somehow aware of the solemnity necessary, he softened his voice and read slowly. At last the measured accents ceased. There were a few moments of profound silence; then two or three people came forward where the mother and son were sitting the lawyer leading the way.

"Well, my boy, I congratulate you."

The boy's face was alternately white and red.

"I do not think I comprehend the whole. I am so startled, I don't know."

He could not go on. Despite his best efforts his voice gave way. He sat down again choking back his sobs. His mother had long before been weeping her quiet tears of unutterable thankfulness.

"There are few boys who come into such a fortune who do thoroughly deserve it," said the lawyer, kindly. "I think you gave that poor old man, who was so rich in merchandise, but so poor in resources for a death-bed, the greatest consolation and comfort that he could receive from any earthly hands. He went to his grave in humble penitence and fervent hope, and he owed it to you. It was very little to give in return, a fortune he could not take with

him, and which no near relatives can claim. I am glad it is such a boy who is to be my ward, for you heard, didn't you, that I am to be your guardian until you are of age, and your adviser and friend afterwards."

"I don't think I quite understood it. The mention of my name for so great a sum gave me such a fright," said Hal, with a faint smile.

"He has left all his property to you ultimately. Perhaps I can tell it more plainly, and the law phrases will not then perplex you. You are to have an income which will be everything you can wish for your mother's ease and your education. Just such another income is to go towards defraying the expenses of a little girl, Evangeline Earle, whom I have not found yet. There is some sad history about her father, which gave Mr. Allen great pain to recall. He frankly avowed that he had sinned deeply against this Mr. Earle, driven him to desperation by a hard, tyrannical persecution. The father, he knew, was dead, but there was a girl some six years ago, and he wished her to be recompensed for the wrong her parents had received. Perhaps we need not talk now about that clause of the will. It is so many years before the affair can be settled, but he wishes you to marry her. He has left with you and your children the solemn charge to do that good with his fortune which his own hardness and avarice denied to him. He was very anxious to impress that idea upon you. He thought first of leaving the bulk of the estate to public charities, but he said that he was certain that a man produced from such a character as you now exhibit would work treble the amount of good with his money that any institution could. The will is made in that belief. He said that the influence of such a disposition as yours was better for the world than fifty fortunes like his. He praised you very warmly, my boy. I trust prosperity will not change you."

"Oh, it frightens me! I shall feel as if he were all the time watching my thoughts and my deeds. I am not so good as he thought me."

The lawyer smiled.

"You are a wonderful boy. I haven't seen an exultant look. Not half so cheery a smile as you had yesterday when I bought a paper of you, when I knew that the morrow would change you into an heir. Shan't you be glad to take your mother to a pleasant home?"

"Oh!" He caught his breath at the thought. "Mother, dear mother, you shall have—"

Then he checked himself.

"Let us go home and talk over it there. I cannot speak here."

"Very well; but in a few days you must make a change. There is a house belonging to the estate near my own. We will fit it up comfortably, get a trusty servant, and you and your mother will be very happy, I think, to make that your home. The income, as I have said before, allows a good many indulgences. I will come and see you to-morrow again."

And the lawyer bowed and smiled, and escorted them down to the carriage.

And shortly Hal and his mother were back again in the dingy, comfortless room they had been often afraid of losing. There, after one look, they fell into each other's arms, sobbing, laughing, kissing, like two crazy children.

A slow step at the door aroused them. A woman, one of the four families living in the poor old house, came into the room with little Nannie asleep in her arms. The bright curls were all entangled, the little cheeks were pale, and red circles around the silky brown eyelashes showed that she had gone to sleep in a fit of crying.

"I thought she'd be happier to wake her here, poor little creature," said the woman.

"Why, what was the matter?" said Mrs. Halstead, taking the little sleeper into her lap, while Hal bent over his pet in affectionate pity.

"Hain't you heard? Mrs. O'Brien is dangerously ill."

"Mother," said Hal, kissing the chubby cheek under the bright curls, "we can take Nannie now. That's the beginning of his work—and it will be a beautiful beginning too. She shall always be your daughter, mother."

His mother bent down and kissed the little sleeper, and then kissed Hal. And so the compact was sealed, and Nannie awoke and was comforted.

CHAPTER II.

TEN years from the date of Abbot Allen's will Hal was walking slowly up the avenue of a charmingly situated country villa, as handsome and manly, and generous-hearted a young gentleman as the country could produce.

It was his first visit to the place—Tanglewood as it was called—and he was going for the first time to

see Evangeline Earle, the young lady to whom the will of Abbot Allen had betrothed him.

Let me go back a little and explain.

The will had given explicitly the name and antecedents of the girl, but no other clue to her actual residence. It had been a difficult task to find her. Indeed, the lawyer himself failed signally. But an advertisement broadly circulated discovered her. Dacus Earle presented himself one day with the necessary credentials to prove himself the brother of Edward Earle, and had brought with him that brother's orphan child, who, as he stated, had been adopted by his wife for her own. The little Evangeline was duly installed into her property, and since her natural guardian manifested his desire to take her to Paris to be educated, no obstacle was thrown in his way.

They assumed much, but managed to get along, all three, upon this income from the Allen estate. Of course there could be no very lavish expenditure, but Mrs. Dacus Earle had a wonderful tact of management. Her one servant, who was cook, lady's-maid, and housemaid, could have told a doleful story.

Tanglewood, which they had bought and remodelled on returning home with Miss Evangeline, a young woman now, illustrated the Earle genius better than any description could do. The gazer marvelled how it had been possible to produce such a magnificent place with no other resources than the income intended solely for the use of one little girl.

The Earles were wonderful people. There was no question about that, not even when one came to closer observation, and discovered that the massive-looking house was very poorly built, the walls thin, the ceilings of the cheapest material, no stucco whatever, but a very feeble fresco. A great deal of glossy paint and poor gilding, but no thorough finish, no solid, genuine material anywhere.

Nevertheless, the superficial effect was quite imposing when the Earles gave their first party. Everything was freshly coated; time had had no opportunity to wear through and betray the cheat. The grounds without were very fine, and Mr. Earle had made the best of them. There were the noble old trees rustling their great branches possibly in acquiescence. There was the fountain in the moonlight, really a charming work of art, with its elaborate grouping of Triton and Naiad spouting their fantastic showers of spray, and its Cupid, upholding the basket of flowers that were always wet with spray.

The fountain was the *chef d'œuvre* of the Earle genius. The master of Tanglewood prided himself upon it as the brightest emanation of his prolific mind. He chuckled over every chance expression of admiration, and soliloquized, exultantly:

"They all admire it. They none of them believe that it cost me less than five hundred pounds. Who would think it anything but marble? I said I brought it from Italy, and so I did; I shall get a new coat of that glossy white before the plaster begins to show. If I can only keep boys from throwing pebbles at it my secret is safe, for the basin is too wide for anyone to reach and examine it. There is not another fountain like it for miles around; Tanglewood alone can boast of such a fountain."

And so Mr. Earle prided himself upon his Greek portico, and his plaster statuary, and Mrs. Earle was equally contented with her cotton velvets and false diamonds, her imitation lace curtains and flimsy brocatelle. But, as I have said before, they were all new, and the gloss was none of it yet worn away.

Hal Halstead pauses as the view breaks upon him.

The massive gateway, the graceful trees, the lordly mansion, the statue-grouped fountain.

What a stately picture they make.

"These people were certainly rich before, or have received some other legacy," mentally ejaculated Hal. What a pity Dacus Earle could not have heard it, and enjoyed another congratulatory self-delusion.

"I sent them word that I was coming. I hope nothing happened to the messenger. But I see no signs of anyone stirring," continued he, musingly.

"I wonder, I do so wonder what Evangeline Earle is like."

But he walked up boldly and passed under the pillared vestibule. The servant was evidently in readiness to receive him. The brightly varnished door swung open the moment his hand touched the bell, and with all due solemnity he was ushered through the long hall, which presented such a definite although at the time scarcely recognizable impression of extreme newness.

The servant pushed open a door, and Hal entered a long room, very rich and grand looking at the first glance. A tall gentleman, dressed elegantly, and a portly lady, in black satin, with earrings and brooch of imitation diamonds, advanced to meet him.

"My dear Mr. Halstead, I welcome you to Tanglewood," said the gentleman with a flourish of the white hand, on which shone a signet ring of such size

that, had it been pure gold and genuine diamonds, might have cost a snug little fortune of itself.

Hal Halstead bowed with a sense of the importance of the occasion, and ventured a slight remark concerning his pleasure at making the acquaintance of the proprietor of Tanglewood.

"Don't speak of it, my dear sir, don't mention it. True greatness is never puffed up, but always benignant and condescending. This, my dear Mr. Halstead, is Mrs. Seraphina Earle."

"A pompous old fellow!" inwardly thought Hal while he turned with a gracious bow towards the lady. Mrs. Seraphina's hazel eyes drooped languidly. She crossed her fat little bejewelled hands across the imitation lace of her bertha, gave a graceful little courtesy, and lisped, in a soft, languid voice:

"I am so happy to meet you, so happy. Dear Mr. Halstead, I know we shall all adore you, you will be such a bright star in our circle! Ah! it is so delightful!"

He glanced apprehensively around the room. He had seen Mr. Earle the pompous, and Mrs. Earle the sentimental, what would he find in Miss Evangeline Earle? That was a question to come home rather more closely. It was something of a relief to discover a little postponement of the answer.

"Ah, you are looking for our dear Evangeline. Sweet unconscious child! We allowed her to follow her own innocent desires. You shall see her presently," lisped Mrs. Earle.

"Seraphina, my love, considering that it is Mr. Halstead, I think you might be gracious enough to take him yourself to Miss Evangeline. No doubt Mr. Halstead will appreciate it. He will see that it is more honour conferred to be conducted into the presence of his betrothed by Mrs. Earle herself than to be escorted by an humble menial."

As he spoke Mr. Dacus Earle drew up his tall figure to its stateliest height and looked down upon the young man with the benignant, patronizing condescension of an emperor.

Hal bit his lip to conceal his amusement, although vexation was getting uppermost in his mind.

"Oh, yes," replied Mrs. Seraphina. "I will go with him. He shall see the darling in her unconscious grace. I know very well where to find her. Come, impatient lover, come and look upon your lovely mistress."

She laid her plump fingers, with all their rainbow sparkle of pseudo-gems, on Hal's arm, and pointed towards the door, her fat little face looking so absurd with a sentimental attempt at playfulness that biting his lips would not serve Hal in the least, and he was obliged to cough vigorously.

But he followed her in silence, while Mrs. Seraphina tripped as lightly as so stout a body could across the hall, and through a back door into a sort of shaded court-yard, with tessellated pavement, made not of marble or stone, but of wood, covered with a sort of cement, which Mr. Earle pronounced to have quite the effect of marble. Putting her finger to her lip, Mrs. Seraphina stole on, and presently made a pause, and turning to him with a little sigh of triumph, pointed out to him a very charming tableau.

For there, reclining carelessly on a gay shawl thrown down upon the pavement, with the fine background of the noble old trees, the stately pillared vestibule, and the really exceedingly graceful as well as elaborate fountain, was a slender girlish figure, clothed in simple white muslin with a bow of pink ribbon at the neck, and a blossom or two in the shiny black curls of hair. Such a relief it was to the gloss and glitter of Mrs. Seraphina, that cool, simple white dress, that quiet, unpretending figure.

Almost unconsciously Hal Halstead drew a long breath of relief.

A garland of neglected flowers was lying beside her, but her eyes were bent downward. She was entirely absorbed by the book lying open beside her.

(To be continued.)

THEY WON'T TROUBLE YOU LONG.—Children grow up—nothing on earth grows so fast as children. It was but yesterday, and that lad was playing with tops, a buoyant boy. He is a man, and gone now! There is no more childhood for him or for us. Life has claimed him. When a beginning is made it's like a travelling stocking, stitch by stitch gives way, till all are gone. The house has not a child in it. There is no more noise in the hall—boys rushing in pell-mell; it is very orderly now. There are no more skates or sleds, bats, balls, or strings, left scattered about. Things are neat enough now. There is no delay of breakfast for sleepy folks; there is no longer any task, before you lie down, of looking after anybody, and tucking up the bedclothes. There are no disputes to settle, nobody to get off to school, no complaint, no importunities for impossible things, no rips to mend, no fingers to tie up, no faces to be

washed, or collars to be arranged. There was never such peace in the house! It would sound like music to have some feet to clatter down the front stairs! Oh, for some children's noise! What used to all us, that we were hushing their loud laugh, checking their noisy frolic, and reproving their slamming and banging the door? We wish our neighbours would only lend us an urchin or two to make a little noise in these premises. A home without children! It is like a lantern and no candle; a garden and no flower; a vine and no grapes; a brook and no water gurgling and rushing in its channel. We want to be tired, to be vexed, to be run over, to hear children at work with all its varieties. During the secular days this is enough marked. But it is Sunday that puts our homes to the proof. That is the Christian family day. The intervals of public worship are long spaces of peace. The family seems made up on that day. The children are at home. You can lay your hands on their heads. They seem to recognize the greater and lesser love—to God and to friends. The house is peaceful, but not still. There is a low and melodious trill of children in it. But Sunday comes too still now. There is a silence that aches in the ear. There is too much room at the table, too much at the hearth. The bedrooms are a world too orderly. There is too much leisure and too little care. Alas! what mean these things? Is somebody growing old? Are these signs and tokens? Is life waning?

STRATAGEM.

"Ha's a dear, darling, clumsy old book-worm," said Clara Lennox, cutting the dead leaves off her pot geranium with a pair of tiny scissors; "but as for marrying Charlie Penn, why I should as soon think of marrying the big book-case, or the piano, or any other solid, substantial piece of furniture!"

"Then why do you encourage him, and flirt with him, and receive attentions from him?" said Sybil Waite, indignantly.

"Why? Oh, because—"

Sybil replied:

"Clara, you're a coquette, and I think you deserve to live and die an old maid, if you trifle with the feelings of such a noble young man as Charlie Penn."

But Clara made no answer, and went on with her scissors, singing some merry air to herself, while the warm sunshine, falling full on her blue eyes, turned them into rills of liquid light.

Yes, Clara Lennox was very pretty, and she knew it; and so, alas, did Charlie Penn.

How the saucy little beauty tormented the faithful, true-hearted fellow. Sometimes she rained sweet words and sweeter smiles upon him—sometimes she would hardly notice him—and sometimes again, her cold, ceremonious dignity would chill him to the very heart. And through it all he hoped and trusted on, as men will do!

"It's too bad, Charlie," said Sybil, who was Charlie's cousin, and faithful ally; "if I were you I wouldn't bear it a minute longer!"

"Yes," said Mr. Penn, sorrowfully; "but suppose you couldn't help yourself? Imagine that all your happiness depended on a girl's fancy—as—as mine does?"

"Are you really as far gone as that, Charlie?" said Sybil, pityingly.

"I'm afraid I am!" said honest Charlie. "Sybil, dear! if I only knew whether or not she cared for me!"

"I'll ascertain that, Charles!" said Sybil, nodding her head significantly.

"How?"

"Ha! What an absurd question to ask! How can I tell how? Only—I'll do it! Promise me one thing, Charlie. Don't see Clara until I give you permission."

"I promise," said Charlie, looking very much puzzled, and a little amused. "How long is it likely to be?"

"Well," said Sybil, thoughtfully, "not very long." And she tripped away, full of sly little plots, plans, and machinations.

Clara was busy making some attractive kind of head-dress out of pink ribbons and artificial pink buds one bright June evening, a little subsequently, when Miss Sybil Waite was announced.

"Clara," said Miss Waite, mysteriously, "I've some news for you!"

"News? What is it?" said Clara, rather abstractedly, putting her head on one side to contemplate the effect of her work.

"Our Charlie is going to be married!"

Clara looked up suddenly.

"What! Charlie Penn?"

"Why, to be sure—whom else could I mean?"

"Married!"

The rosy glow was coming and going unconsciously on Clara's cheek. She laid down her work.

"Married? And to whom?"

"Oh, that's a secret—Charlie must tell you that himself! Are you not glad, Clara?"

"Y—yes, very glad!"

But Clara Lennox spoke slowly, and her under lip quivered a little. She did not look so very much rejoiced, after all! Sybil watched her fair face with a keen, observant glance.

"You see," said Sybil, "I thought you would like to know, because you and Charlie were such old friends!"

"Yes, to be sure," said Clara; and the pink ribbons slipped unheeded to the floor, while Clara leaned her cheek on her hand and looked dreamily at the far-away sunset.

Sybil arose to go, and Clara started from her reverie. But Miss Waite was satisfied with the result of her inquiries, and no persuasion could induce her to remain longer.

Clara went back to her seat in the sunset loveliness to think, and—to cry! For Clara Lennox was very low-spirited, and wished to find out the secret of her own passionate, impulsive little heart.

"Clara!"

Miss Lennox dashed the drops away from her cheek with a quick motion—she had not heard the familiar footstep on the threshold.

"Mr. Penn!"

She did not say "Charlie," as she had been wont to do.

"You have been crying, Clara; may I ask you why?"

"I don't know why," said Clara, telling a deliberate falsehood. "I suppose because I felt lonesome, and—and—"

She paused abruptly here.

"Clara," said Charlie, gently, "I have something to say to you to-night."

"It's something," thought Clara, her heart beginning to beat hurriedly. "I wonder who she is? I know, I know I shall hate her!"

"Can you guess what it is?"

"Yes," said Clara, passionately, "I know what it is. You are in love!"

And then the tide of tears burst forth—she hid her face in her hands.

"Dear Clara, will you give me a word of hope? Will you promise one day to be mine?"

"I!" repeated Clara, looking up, with sudden agitation. "Oh, Charlie, is it me?"

"Whom else could it be, dearest? You have always been first and sweetest to my heart. Answer me, Clara—tell me yes!"

And Clara's "yes" was almost inaudible through her sobs; yet she was very happy too.

"I told you I could find out," said little Sybil, looking very wise, when Charlie Penn came back exultant to tell her that Clara Lennox was to be his wife in August.

Sybil's stratagem had proved successful.

H. F.

SCIENCE.

A PHOTOMAGNETIC COMPASS.—An ingenious contrivance has been recently invented by a naval engineer, Mr. Corridi, for ascertaining a ship's course during a voyage. On the dial of the compass, instead of the star which indicates the north, a circular opening is made, furnished with a small lens. The light shining on the compass penetrates through the lens, and traces a black mark or line on a sheet of sensitive paper underneath, which is made to move at a certain speed by means of clockwork. The sensitized paper turns with the ship, and, as the needle remains perfectly steady, every deviation or alteration of the course is photographed on the paper.

NEW SYSTEM OF WARMING CHURCHES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS.—Mr. Moule has introduced a new system of warming public buildings. The arrangements may be thus described:—Along the entire length of the centre or side aisles of a church runs a wide horizontal chamber, the upper surface of which is on a level with and forms part of the floor of the building. Into this chamber passes all the heat and smoke from one or more furnaces so constructed as to consume the least fuel with the greatest effect. These furnaces, with which any sort of coal or coke may be used, are placed entirely out of reach, either in vaults below the church, where such exist, or in a small fire-proof stove-hole, some few

feet below the level of the floor of the building. The smoke is allowed, when cold, to escape from the chamber at the part farthest from the furnace into a common chimney, suitable means being provided for regulating with ease and certainty the temperature of the building. In the church itself there is nothing whatever to be seen of the apparatus; but the upper surface of the chamber, or, in other words, the floor of the building, becomes gradually and gently heated, and the warmth radiating therefrom is equally diffused throughout the entire building. The following advantages are claimed for the system:—A saving of about one-half of prime cost in the construction of the apparatus, as compared with heating by water or steam; the cost of fuel consumed in securing the same amount of warmth is not more than one-third; the warmth is more equally diffused than by any other means; there is no unpleasant smell or vapour connected with this system; there are no gratings, pipes, or other unsightly objects, or inconvenient projections, to be dealt with; and the apparatus being out of reach as well as out of sight, cannot be tampered with, or become a source of danger to the occupants of the building; it is not liable to get out of order, cannot be affected by frost, needs no costly repairs, and it involves absolutely no risk of setting fire to the building; it gives great facilities for regulating the amount of heat supplied, and for continuing it many hours without renewal of fuel; and it is also readily combined with any efficient system of ventilation. The apparatus has been in use for some time in Belgrave Chapel, Belgrave Square, and in St. Peter's, Buckingham Gate.

WHAT MAY BE HAD FROM PINE LEAVES.

M. PANNEVITE, by the physical and chemical treatment of pine leaves, &c., obtains from them, first, a kind of wool, called "forest wool," which can be felted, spun, and woven like ordinary wool; second, an aromatic liquid, baths of which would be of sovereign efficacy; third, a great number of oils, ethereal essences, spirits, soaps, &c. The matter has been lying dormant for some time, but the produce of the forest wool is now being manufactured in Paris in a great number of efficacious and salutary forms.

1st. Vegetable Wadding, which retains all the properties of the pine. It is always dry and emits a most beneficial aroma. Schillbach, Professor at the University of Jena, pronounces it to be, in cases of cold, bronchitis, asthma, sore-throats, hoarseness, spine complaint, &c., the simplest and safest remedy within reach of all.

2nd. Raw Vegetable Wool.—Mattresses made with this wool are cheaper by half than those made with ordinary wool. The mattresses of pine wool do not retain damp; its odour and the oxygen which it evolves destroy insects and neutralize the organic miasmata which cause so much illness. They never require either cleaning or remaking.

3rd. Schmidt-Mistler Flannel.—On account of the resin, the tannin, and the formic acid which it contains, it is more useful than the ordinary flannel in assisting the functions of respiration, absorption, and perspiration. It can be made rough or soft at will, and is valuable for articles of underclothing, &c. It deserves to become as popular in France as it is in Germany. It is recommended by the faculty as an antidote to paralysis, apoplexy, rheumatism, gout, &c.

4th. Ethereal Pine Oil.—Is most useful for friction at the commencement of paralysis or apoplexy, &c.

MARRY.—Jeremy Taylor says, if you are for pleasure, marry; if you prize health, marry; and even if money be your object, marry. A good wife is heaven's best gift to man, his angel and minister of graces innumerable, his gem of many virtues, his casket of jewels. Her voice, the sweetest music; her smiles, the brightest day; her kiss, the guardian of his safety, the balsam of his life; her industry, the surest wealth; her economy, his softest steward; her lips, his softest pillow of his cares; and her prayers, the ablest advocates of heaven's blessings on his head.

BOYS USING TOBACCO.—A strong and sensible writer says a good sharp thing, and a true one, too, for boys who use tobacco. It has utterly spoiled and utterly ruined thousands of boys. It tends to softening and weakening the bones, and it greatly injures the brain, the spinal marrow, and the whole nervous fluid. A boy who smokes early and frequently, or in any way uses large quantities of tobacco, is never known to make a man of much energy, and generally lacks muscular and physical, as well as mental power. We would particularly warn boys who want to be anything in the world to shun tobacco as a most baneful poison. It injures the teeth. It produces an unhealthy state of the throat and lungs, hurts the stomach, and blasts the brain and nerve.



[MABEL'S GREAT TRIAL.]

EARTHLY IDOLS.

How happy we were together—father and mother, Lily and I—how very, very happy! We hear it repeated over and over again, that there is no unalloyed happiness on earth; but looking back upon those years, I cannot think of sorrow or of care. Childish tears are like April showers—the sunshine is brighter after them.

We used to cry, sometimes passionately, Lily and I, but I am sure I do not know what it was for, and I know that I always felt lighter-hearted and happier after it. I remember we used to sit down sometimes and sob as if our hearts would break, over some childish folly; and when I had cried until I had forgotten how I would venture to look at Lily, and she would be peeping at me, her blue eyes twinkling, and her sweet lips curved with smiles; then we would both laugh gleefully, and brighten up again, and bound away to our play happier than ever. With us I knew that tears were only an abundance of joy which we could not restrain, and so it found vent.

Our home! How beautiful it was to us. There were people who thought it lonely; but it was dear and lovely to us, all the year through, from the time we caught the first scent of the moist, bare ground, and heard the crows cawing over the pasture-land in the earliest spring-time, until the sweet summer and the fruitful autumn had given place to the sparkling ice-crystals and fairy snow-wreaths of happy, hale old winter.

I will try and describe it to you as it seemed to me then.

It is very much the same now; but the spirit and the charm which encircled it are fled, and it will

never be the same to me as then, and so, if I am to tell you about it, I must close my eyes and go back forty years.

There, I can see it now, just as it looked in the golden sunshine; the house, the orchards, the wide landscape, the woodlands, and the calm river. Away to the north-west the solemn hills tower towards heaven, blue as the summer sky, except at sunset, when their summits glow in crimson and amber and gold.

The landscape is broken into gentle swells and ridges, and through its green surface the tranquil river comes winding slowly. At the back of the house is the little hill that used to seem so high, with its fringe of pine-trees on its top; and here, at the foot of the garden, is where Lily and I used to lie in the soft summer twilight, and watch through their dark foliage for the silver stars to appear in the peaceful sky.

Here is the cool, dewy lane by the orchard, where every summer night, when the sunset glory had faded from the river and the distant hill-tops, we ran to open the gate for sweet-breathed "Brindle" and "Blossom," and "Bess," who came lowing from the green pasture to be milked. The impetuous brook babbles by with its monotonous complaint, and here, where the roses cluster on either bank, it rushes headlong into the quiet river.

There have been changes, of course, in all these years in the old place; but if it could shake off every vestige and mark of decay, and stand forth in all the olden brightness and bloom, these eyes and this heart of mine are so old now that I could not see it as I did then.

There would be the tinge of age and sorrow between it and me, and the angel-beckonings, and glimpses of a far more radiant land to tempt me from it.

There are people much older than I who seem young and hale in comparison; but I have lived more than they. My whole life's happiness was comprised in those holy, happy childish years, and the experience and suffering of three-score years and ten into the years that have intervened.

Merry, innocent childhood! which we all have enjoyed, how beautiful it is, and how expressive of the wisdom of heaven. As long as there are sad men and women, bent forms, sunken eyes, and gray hair, so long there will be glad, happy forms of light, mirth and beauty; prattling tongues, busy fingers, and innocent eyes, from which we may catch glimpses of heaven.

Oh, how beautiful our Lily was! and how I loved her. People used to say: "Mabel is like her father, and Lillian like her mother."

Father was dark and grave, with quiet habits, and mother was sunny and cheerful, with golden hair and heavenly eyes. Lily was the beauty, and I gloried in it. I loved to study her face; to mark every bewitching glance. If we bent over the brook, my eyes always met hers in the bright waters. I could not look at my face with hers beside it. Her beauty was an unfailing delight to me; but she would always say:

"I love your face the best, Mabel."

I was twelve and Lily ten when Mr. Gartney purchased the farm adjoining ours. He was very rich, and, wearied with trade and toil, had retired from business, and had purchased this place upon which to spend the remainder of his days.

He was a widower and childless. The old buildings were removed, and a large and elegant mansion took their place, into which he came in the early part of April. So unobtrusive, so large-hearted and benevolent was he that the neighbours, despite their prejudices against his large house, were drawn towards him from the very first. Dear, kind old man! In the shock which awaited Lily and I how could we have lived had it not been for his protection and love?

The garden was brilliant with the profuse bloom of midsummer, and the heavy western sky was prophetic of a thunderstorm, as we hurried home from school at the close of an oppressive, sultry day to find our father lying upon a couch, his temples throbbing with pain and his face flushed with fever.

Mother stood near him, pale and frightened, trying to soothe his sufferings and persuade herself and us that it was nothing dangerous. But in the drear midnight, when the storm was at its height and he had grown rapidly worse, her eyes met mine appealingly.

"Mabel, darling, dare you go for Mr. Lindsay to summon a physician?"

"Yes, mother."

She pinned a heavy shawl carefully about me and kissed me with lips that were cold as clay.

"'Tis a terrible night for you to be out, my Mabel," she said, "but I dare not leave him. Heaven will take care of you, my precious child—do not be afraid."

I hastened into the wild darkness, and I knew that she was praying for me.

The storm was terrific, but the fear at my heart for father was so intense that I did not heed it. I had waked up in the still, blank midnight many a time with Lily's arms about me and thought how solemn and fearful it would seem to be out alone. The darkness of midnight was united with thunder and rain, fierce lightning and warring winds now, but it did not equal the pain and terror in my soul.

I tried to imagine as I stumbled on, now blinded by the lightning and then surrounded by darkness so appalling that it seemed like complete annihilation, that it was an awful dream and that I should wake up by-and-by beside Lily and find with deep thankfulness that father was not ill and that I had not been out in that dreadful night; and the bright to-morrow would come, and I should see if the little robins in the willow that we had watched so long were full-fledged and flown away. We would feed the dear little chickens in the wide farmyard, and I would ask mother to pick and arrange the bouquet I had promised my teacher to-day. Oh, it could not be that father was so ill. "I am sure he will be well again soon," I said over and over to myself; "a great many people have been very ill and got well again."

A terrible thought kept haunting my brain, trying to gain admittance, taking upon itself definite form and shape; but I would not harbour it. I shut my heart and soul absolutely against it, and cried: "Go back, go back, spectre!" A flash of lightning revealed Mr. Lindsay's house at last, and then left me in the thick darkness to feel my way to the door.

There were loud exclamations of pity and alarm when my errand was known. I heard the sound of the horse's feet as they led him out of the stable, and a moment after they sped out of hearing. Kind Mrs. Lindsay removed my wet shawl, kissed me, and drew me silently to a seat, and, awed and thrilled with the grandeur and sublimity of the storm, we waited till its close.

Ten days after the same kind woman came where Lily and I were sitting, and drew an arm around each of us, and led us into the room where father was lying. Mother was sitting close beside him, her face pale and haggard, and a terrible stony, strained look in her eyes, which were fixed upon his face. He held out his hands to us.

"Come here, my darlings! I have talked to you of heaven many times. He has called me now and I must go to Him."

He blessed and kissed Lily tenderly, and held out his arms to me.

Oh, Mabel, you love mother and Lily, even as I love them. Do not look so, Mabel—speak, and say that you love them."

"Yes, father."

"Be their staff and their stay, my strong, brave Mabel, and meet me—in heaven."

The lids closed wearily, and a look of ineffable peace settled over his face. "He was dead!"

Lily shrieked and sobbed, and clung to him as if she would bring him back with passionate caresses. Mother never moved her eyes from his face, but sat as if she were a marble statue. I did not mean, or shriek, or cry; I went into the garden—his garden, he had tended so carefully.

There was nothing in the face of nature of pitiful sympathy or sadness. Everything was fresh, bright, and beautiful, in heartless mockery of my grief. "I could only repeat the awful words—"Father is dead!"

Oh, summer sunlight, how can you shine? Oh, flaunting lilies, turn away from me and droop your heads! Oh, robin—robin, how can you sing? Father is dead! Oh, in all this weary earth should I never hear his voice again! How could mother and Lily and I live on when he was dead? Why could we not die now, and be together still?

The hours dragged on. The neighbours came in sadly, silently performing their kind services.

The distant hills were turning gray; the dew began to fall. "Blossom," and "Bess," and "Brindle," came up the lane, and waited patiently.

Mr. Gartney came to me at last. He did not try to soothe me by words; he drew me towards him, and my head sank on his shoulder. Light and memory, and sense of suffering, all left me. I woke up long after, a wreck of my former self—so weak and emaciated that I could scarcely lift my hand or move my head. Mother and Lily were there; father had been buried for weeks. I could see through the window that the flowers were dead, and the trees were flaming in gold, and russet, and red.

I looked forward to health, oh, so wearily, so hopelessly. It came to me, however, with the bracing October air. I could not but experience a feeling of gratitude, or pleasure—I hardly know how to define it—at the sight of Lily's deep thankfulness for my recovery. She almost seemed to forget her awful affliction in her joy that I was saved. She clung around me with happy tears and smiles, and awoke me from my sleep with kisses and caresses. I seemed to move about in a listless apathy, brooding over my own sorrow.

I was aroused from my stupor at length by the sight of mother's hopeless grief. She did not mourn, or complain; her every effort was for Lily and I, but I saw that she grew daily more unearthly and spiritual. That she was slowly but surely fading away from us was evident to all. Agony stirred my soul's lowest depths when I first felt this; but long before the end came I had nerve myself to be strong and endure it for Lily's sake.

When the early buds were bursting we toods around her, Mrs. Lindsay, Mr. Gartney, Lily, and I. Her face was angelic in its pure beauty. We knew by the rapt expression, the deep peacefulness, that she was "almost there." Lily clung to me as her only strength and hope, and I, remembering the sacredness of my trust, prayed fervently for the strength which came in that solemn hour. There was nothing now but to wait with breaking hearts for the frail cord to sever. Towards the last her mind seemed to wander.

"Look at me, Mabel," she would say, "with Philip's eyes; kiss me with his lips. He is here, Mabel, close by me, blessing you and Lily." Then she fell into a quiet sleep.

We watched her until the minutes passed into hours, but she never woke again. We did not know when she died; death came so silently and painlessly. I could not believe that she was dead when Mr. Gartney bent over and said, solemnly:

"It is all over now; she is with the angels."

I laid my cheek against hers, and found that it was cold. At that moment I could not be strong; I was only a child and there she lay before me, cold and dead—my sweet mother, and my heart spoke out in the bitter wail:

"Oh, mother, mother, take us with you!"

But Lily was left me, and her sorrow it was my duty to alleviate as far as lay in my power. Mr. Gartney was our rock of refuge. He managed everything for the burial, and erected the beautiful tablets to the memory of the dead; and then he begged to take us to his own home, and adopt us as his own. I tried to thank him—to show him how grateful we were for his goodness, but how impossible it would be for me to live where I could see the dear home, and the dearer graves, left deserted, or what was more intolerable still, in the hands of strangers. I was afraid he would think me ungrateful, and foolish, but he understood me thoroughly.

"It shall be as you wish, Mabel," he said. "You shall live here just the same as you have always done; but you must agree to the rest of my plan."

I tried to discover the amount and extent of our means. Besides the farm and its proceeds, I was afraid we had nothing; but he assured me that it was ample for our support and education, and affirmed that there was sufficient invested for all our future wants. And so, by all that noble-hearted charity, and love and delicate kindness could devise, we were comforted, and our new life began.

A stout, faithful girl came and was installed permanently in the house. A competent man took the labour of the farm. A tutor was engaged, and our education went on. The years that followed were sweetly mournful. Watched over and guarded lovingly, as we were, we still felt the intense loneliness, the unavailing yearnings of orphanage.

As time passed on Lily's grief became a mournful memory, rather than a present sorrow. I seemed to fill the void in her life, and she looked up to me with a sweet sense of protection and care, as a child looks to a parent. There was only two years' difference in our ages, but a stranger would have said there was more; and she always seemed much younger to me. I could not forget my irretrievable loss, and the responsibility which rested upon me; consequently I grew quiet, did, and sad, while she grew light-hearted and joyous, and oh, so beautiful.

Six years passed on, and Lily was seventeen. Our tutor was dismissed, and our benefactor used to come and sit with us during the evenings and hear Lily play, commending her skill and talent, and expressing himself pleased and gratified that she had improved her privileges so well. She loved music and flowers, and birds, and all beautiful things; and it was fitting that she should. I had had the same advantages that Lily had, but I never could play.

Lily and I were in the garden one bright morning, when Mr. Gartney came and leaned over the fence where we were gathering bouquets.

"You have heard me speak, my children," he said, "of my nephew and heir, Willard Gartney. He has been abroad since he left college, but he has written to me that he is coming home now, and I expect him soon. He is orphaned, like yourselves, and has no relatives in the world, excepting me. I shall expect you to be very good friends."

"See, Mr. Gartney," said Lily, "how busily Mabel is engaged. Of course, she hasn't heard a word about this gentleman."

"How are these heliotropes, Mabel?" he said, turning to me.

"They are prospering," I answered, "but my wonderful fortune-plum, that I have watched so earnestly, is dying, despite my efforts."

"Ah, that is bad, for of course you believe the whim connected with it."

"I have heard it rehearsed so many times that I cannot help remembering it," I said.

I will not dwell long upon the summer that followed. How Willard Gartney came, and how good and noble, and talented he was, even beyond our expectations. How he sought our society, and how pleased Mr. Gartney seemed to see us so happy together.

I will not linger over the recital of those happy days, and the events which followed. Suffice it to say, it was all my own fault. I was stupidly blind, or I should have seen. I had never thought

of Lily otherwise than as a child, to be protected, loved, and petted, or it never would have been. But I found, when it was too late, that he loved my beautiful Lily, and not me.

He led her up to me one night on the moonlit porch, and asked if I would give her to him; and I saw before me a beautiful woman, with the radiant halo of a strange, new sweet life about her—no longer a child.

I was not surprised then, nor amazed, only struck to the heart with a vague sense of my own selfishness and suffering, and dimly-conscious that Lily was far from me, where I never could draw her to me again, to be as she had been to me before. Even in the humiliation and pain of that moment the thought that Lily had gone from my protection and care, and would never need me again, was uppermost. They witnessed my emotion, but neither interpreted it aright, and I thanked heaven that it was so.

I conquered my feelings at last, and grew calm. I knew how true and good he was, how tenderly he would love her, and how happy she would be, and I gave my consent, and blessed them both, and went in to my chamber. None but the All-seeing knows the struggle that I passed through; but I conquered it, and came out calm and strong to bear still other burdens that time would bring.

The wedding preparations followed, for Willard urged a speedy marriage.

We sat together, sewing, one afternoon, when Willard was absent, discussing the future, and dilating upon his goodness, our happiness, and the brilliant plans she had formed for me. I could not help feeling pained, and grieved, when I saw how every sweet hope and plan of hers was centred in the certainty that I should be with her still, and I felt that it was wrong to deceive her longer. So I laid my work down, and bent over to her side, and drew her into my arms as I always did when she was wholly mine. She divined something, for when she saw the expression of my face a startled look came into the sweet eyes, but I did not heed it. I began as low and as tenderly as I could:

"Lily, darling, you love Willard better than your own life?"

"Oh, yes, Mabel."

"Far better than you love me."

"Oh, Mabel, don't say that. I love him differently, of course, and oh, so dearly! But, Mabel, my darling, precious sister, I have loved you longer—ever since I was born you have been my guardian angel—how can I say that I love anybody, even Willard, better than I do you?"

"But, Lily, he will be all to you that I have ever been, and more. You love him so that where he is your home and heart will be, and you will be blest, and happy, even if I am not with you."

"Mabel!" she exclaimed, quickly, "what do you mean?"

"I mean, darling, that I cannot leave this dear spot where you and I have spent so many years together, where the ashes of our dear parents repose, and—"

"Mabel! Mabel! Oh, you do not, cannot mean that you love this home better than you love your Lily? Oh, you surely do not mean that you are not going to live with me?" And she clung to me, sobbing as if her heart would break.

Oh, what could I do? I never loved and pitied her as I did then, and I knew that my conduct must seem inexplicable, cold and cruel to her. "How hard and dreary the way before me seemed then!" She begged of me to retract what I had said, and implored of me, with the most passionate tears, to promise that I would never leave her. In the midst of this, to me, painful scene I looked up and saw Mr. Gartney at the door. I had thought it all an uncertain, dim, instinctive impression that he knew it all. He did not betray me by word or look, but when he had done talking with Lily I knew that he possessed my secret.

Willard came and added his expostulations and entreaties to Lily's, but they could not alter my determination. I could not say much, but Mr. Gartney made it seem at least reasonable to them both, and they began at last to look upon it as a certainty and said no more about it, although I knew they were both pained and astonished; and when, after the wedding, they drove away, the sight of Lily's sweet face—so much like our angel mother's—as she looked back to me from the carriage window with her blue eyes full of tears—went to my heart and haunted me for months.

I know that I was changed after Lily went away. I should have known it by the increased tenderness

and respect with which I was treated, if in no other way. Mr. Gartney grew kinder, if possible. The neighbours were sympathetic and respectful, but I was never one to be pitied and, caressed, and loved, as tenderly as Lily would have been in my place.

Time passed on, which brought long, loving letters from Lily, telling of her husband, her home, and her longing for my presence; but I saw by every letter that she was learning in his love to miss me less.

At the close of a year and a half she came home to spend the summer. In June her little Agnes was born, named after our sainted mother. She stayed until autumn, and then her husband came for his wife and child. She left me gladly, almost eagerly, to go home with him. I was lonelier than ever after that. The autumn had never seemed so drear before.

I sat one night, when an awful storm was raging without, musing before the fire, with Bessie knitting demurely in one corner of the broad hearth, and Hiram in the other. All at once, above the roar of the storm, I caught the clatter of iron hoops ringing down the road. I rushed to the door, as a horse, snorting with fright, stopped exhausted at the gate. The figure of a man lay on the ground with his foot in the stirrup.

"Bring me a lantern, Hiram," I shrieked, for a terrible fear shot through my heart.

In a moment he and Bessie were at my side. "Oh, Miss Howe, it's Mr. Gartney's Fury," exclaimed Hiram, as his eye fell on the horse, and he sprang to disentangle the stirrup.

The light of the lantern fell full upon the face that was lying there. The rain was splashing down upon the kindly, upturned brow and the closed eyes. It needed no second glance to tell me that my noble benefactor and friend, my second father, was dead. Another cord snapped, another heartstring severed.

We bore him tenderly in and the alarm soon spread. The noble philanthropist, the kind neighbour, friend, and citizen was widely mourned. Willard and Lily came, with their child, the third day after his death. The strong man shook like a reed, and the tears fell like rain upon the calm, unconscious face of his uncle, when they led him into the room where he was lying. He had been father, and mother, and friend to him. I did not reverence him less at the sight of his grief for this kind, good man.

They bore him away and buried him beside the wife of his youth. Willard and Lily remained with me a week. It was then that I first noticed that Lily looked so pale and delicate, and a thought shot through my soul of another face which bore this same look at first, when the insidious disease had but just commenced, but she laughingly assured me that she felt quite well, and that I was nervous and over anxious. Heaven knows that I prayed it might be so, but before six months had passed Willard wrote to me, saying that she was failing perceptibly, and wanted me to come immediately.

I set out with painful forebodings, but still, hoping against hope. The first sight of his face dispelled even the faintest breath of hope. She understood her situation fully and so did her husband. Young and happy as she was, she gave herself up cheerfully, but the stern agony which settled upon his face told how impossible it would be for him to be reconciled to this decree. Oh, how painful to watch so sweet a life fade out. I cannot dwell upon it even now. He brought her home to die and laid her in her last sleep beneath the willows, beside our parents. I idolized Lily, sweet sister, we are separated, but it will not be for ever.

We stood beside the grave after the burial, Willard and I. "I cannot stay here, Mabel," he said. "I shall go abroad for awhile; I shall leave little Agnes with you, for I know you will be as true to her as you were to her mother. Heaven bless you, Mabel, sweet sister; you are tender as an angel and true as steel. I pity you so, for you loved Lily too, and you have never forgiven me for taking her from you. Why is it, Mabel, that you have always disliked me? From the very first you have always been grave and stern with me."

I was cold and trembling, but I struggled to say, "Oh, Brother Willard, how you have mistaken me!" My manner implied more than my words meant.

He took my hand and we stood together above the dead.

"I am going away, Mabel, and there is no one in the world now for me but you and little Agnes. For the sake of our lost treasure give me your full sympathy and forgiveness."

"It is yours, my brother," I said, calmly.

"Good-bye, Mabel; heaven bless you. I shall come back some time."

I went back to the old life, with one sunbeam on my pathway, the sweet presence of Lily's child. Every day I trembled at the growing idolatry in my soul. I tried not to love her so, but I could not help it. I felt that I should not have her long, for she was delicate and fragile, with heaven foreshadowed in her eyes, but, oh, so winsome, so sweet, so precious. I devoted my whole time to her. I spent hours of the sweet summer days in the meadows and river-paths with her, searching for the loveliest flowers to twine in her bright hair. I carried her in my arms up the rugged hill-sides, in search of the most luscious berries. I lifted her up to the grand piano, and let her thump the keys to her heart's content; and then in the long twilights I pressed her against my heart, and rehearsed, to her wonder and delight, the pretty stories that mother used to tell Lily and I. The neighbours all told me that I should spoil her, but she only grew more and more gentle and affectionate.

Willard had sold his uncle's estate, and a family of strangers came and occupied through the summer the house which had so many sacred associations for me. Armorer was their name. The mother was a haughty, dignified woman, and Belle and Louis, her daughter and son. There were wonderful stories told of their wealth and splendour, but the occasional glimpses I caught of Belle Armorer, as she glided through the garden and grounds, convinced me that she was simply tastefully elegant. Her beauty was of the same type as my lost Lily's azure eyes and golden hair. I loved to see her flitting about among the flowers, in her fresh morning dresses, or galloping down the broad, pleasant road upon the pony, when the weather was fine.

We came across the brother and sister, one day quite unexpectedly in one of our woodland rambles. They made themselves known, and secured me unceremoniously for taking so little notice of them, and begged me to call. They seemed struck with Aggie's beauty, and petted and caressed her in a manner that won her heart. They had noticed us often in the garden, they said, and had longed to become better acquainted.

After this Belle used often to come and sit with Aggie and me in the arbour and garden, or take long walks in the fields and woods, and sometimes her brother came with her. A sweet, enduring friendship sprang up between me and this beautiful girl, which, though quiet and undemonstrative, was none the less fervent.

They went back to London and shut up the house for the winter, but in the spring they came again. The second summer only Belle and her mother came back. Louis was travelling. Belle was with me more than ever that season, and when she left us again the winter lay gloomily before me, in drear contrast to the bright summer days we had spent together.

It was then my sweet bud withered, my darling Aggie, and it was not in the golden summer weather that we laid her beneath the willows, but upon a wild, winter's day that they hollowed her little grave, and heaped the pitiless snow upon her breast. The bitter night arose, and the cruel stars shone out, but I lingered near her. How could I leave my tender nestling out under the winter sky alone? I stood beneath the solemn splendour of the stars, till I felt colder than the winter snow; all the saddening memories of my stormy life swept over me, but I could not weep.

A step on the crisp snow startled me, and I turned to meet Louis Armorer, face to face. He caught my hand passionately.

"I have come back to you, Mabel, because I cannot live away from you longer. I love you. Your presence has haunted me every moment since I left you, and I came here to-night to know my fate."

"Mr. Armorer—" I began.

"Silence!" he exclaimed, vehemently. "Answer me this. Do you love me?"

"No."

"And never can?"

"Never."

His face grew livid. He poured out a torrent of invectives upon me, accusing me of deceiving him, of leading him to believe that I loved him. Then followed passionate pleading, wild, unreasonable, chimerical protestations on his part, and unswerving calmness on mine. I strove to allay his excitement, and pleaded my recent grief, the death of sweet Aggie, in the vain hope that the memory of her would move him, but every word I uttered added to his madness.

"You love Willard Gartney," he said, at length. "You are waiting for him, and he will come to you. You are a cold, heartless woman. You have lured me on, and watched and waited for this day."

Heaven knows it was false; but he left me in anger, and when another summer came, and Belle and her mother came back, he had gone abroad again.

I had broken the news of his darling's death to Willard as tenderly as I could, but I saw by his letters that a vague discomfort had come over him, and I knew that his heart was yearning for his native land and the graves of his loved ones. In September I opened one of his letters, and towards the last I read the following:

"I thought, Mabel, until lately, that with you beside me—and our mutual sorrow, a connecting link between us—we might have been happy. Forgive me, Mabel, for writing this, it can do no harm now that I know that I have mistaken you again. Receive my earnest wishes for your happiness, and may you be very happy as Louis Armorer's wife."

I read it over and over again before I saw it all clearly, and then I knew how it happened; but, oh, I could wait with a grand, happy patience. He would be home in the autumn, and then he would know all.

November came, and with it a fearful tale of storm and shipwreck, and the loss of three hundred lives in the cruel sea.

Mr. Lindsay came up to the gate where I was standing, and handed me the paper containing the list of the lost. After I had read it the sky and earth grew dark. I do not know how long I stood there, but when I turned to go in day had changed into night. The sky was heavy with dreary, ominous clouds. The south wind blew and rustled the dead leaves over Lily's grave and swept them whirling at my feet. I crept into the kitchen where Hiram and Bessy sat in their accustomed places, and crouched down upon a low stool in the warmth of the great wood fire.

After a little while Hiram came and gently disengaged the paper from my hands, and they knew they soothed me by their kind-hearted, practical way. They have united their fortunes long ago, but they live with me still.

There was a clause in Mr. Gartney's will which ran thus:

"To my adopted and much-loved daughter, Mabel Howe, I give and bequeath the sum of ten thousand pounds."

So I am above want and able to do much good. I have never been the strong, self-reliant Mabel since that night. My eyes are faded and my hair is silvered now, but when I catch the reflection of my face I see a look in the faded eyes which the old Mabel never wore—a look of peace and perfect trust in heaven. I have no earthly idols now; my treasures are stored in heaven, and I am looking towards sunset, with a beautiful hope in my heart that grows stronger as the days go by. A. B.

THE first direct importation of California wheat has been brought by the ship Alice Risson, and consists of 3,500 quarters. The wheat is of five different qualities, the best being the finest sample brought to this country, and has been sold for 72s. per quarter.

A MAGNIFICENT PRIZE.—Here is a fine prize for some historian of the twentieth century. A Russian general of artillery has recently died, after having deposited in the Bank of St. Petersburg a sum of 8,000,000, to remain at interest until the year 1925, the anniversary of the death of the Emperor Alexander I., and then to be given to the author of the best history of that sovereign. The sum will then amount to 384,000.

EXTRAORDINARY PRICE FOR AN ENGRAVING.—At the sale of the effects of the late Sir Charles Price the well-known Rembrandt etching, "Christ healing the Sick," commonly called "the hundred-guilder piece" (from its original price), was knocked down to Mr. Palmer, of Portland Place, London, for the astonishing sum of 1,180*l.*, the last previous bidder being Mr. Clement, the well-known dealer, of Paris. As may be supposed, this etching is of the first and finest state, with a good margin—only eight being known, and of these five are in public collections.

SINGULAR PEDESTRIAN CONTEST.—A curious wager has been decided between the French and English residing at St. Pierre, near Calais, for a stake of 400*l.* The question was who would go in the shortest time from Calais to Boulogne on foot, without running or trotting. The disputants left the Calais cemetery at 1.14 in the afternoon, and reached

Ma Campagne, the Frenchman in five hours five minutes, and the Englishman in five hours and thirty minutes, so that the latter lost by twenty-five minutes. The Frenchman is a cattle driver, named Charles Galant, and the Englishman is Mr. Raubot, a steward of one of the boats running between Calais and London. Each of the competitors received 100*l*. They were both very much exhausted on arriving at Boulogne. This may be imagined on considering the distance. The diligence takes four hours and a half to perform it, and often more.

OLIVER DARVEL.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"You have then irrevocably made up your mind to this dangerous experiment?"

"Yes, I thought you understood that. If Gertrude proves a loving and faithful helpmate to me in my new position, as I think she will, for she was once ambitious, I will throw aside all thoughts of the new charmer, who, I confess, has rather fascinated me. If she shows that she will not do this she but precipitates her own fate; and it will be no fault of mine if she be again turned over to your tender mercies. The beautiful Countess of Indenstein is quite ready to console me for whatever may happen to my wife, so I shall be no loser at all events."

At this hideous avowal the baron laughed his soft laugh, and he presently said:

"I understand now, nephew; and I think after all that has passed between us that it is an absurd waste of time for you to attempt to play a double game with me. I now know that your future course is determined upon, and you only seek a fair pretext for getting rid of a woman who has become an incubus to you. You profess to love Gertrude passionately, yet you wish to raise another woman to the place she now occupies. I shall do nothing to thwart your schemes; for the Lady of Indenstein will be a grand match even for the future Elector of Lichtenfels, for her wealth is greater than that you won by your union with the heiress of Guilderstein. Forward and onward is your motto, and I promise to aid you, as far as lies in my power, to soar to the pinnacle of prosperity."

"Thanks; everything is in your power," said the prince, significantly. "I will throw aside my mask, since it is so clumsily worn before so astute an observer as you are, and tell you the plain truth. Gertrude's kinsman, the Count of Guilderstein, has been sent on some mission to Lichtenfels, and he constantly importunes me to bring his cousin thither. He marvels that she is contented to vegetate in this place, and declares that she must be greatly changed from what she once was."

"I dare not remove her to Lichtenfels without having some reaction in her mind produced, for Guilderstein is too keen a man not to suspect some foul play towards her if he see her in her present state. Neither is it my wish to have her immediately removed from my path, for the count is unmarried; he is suffering from a disease that must soon destroy him, and he has intimated to me his intention to leave the princess the greater portion of his wealth provided she survives him. Thus you see how important it is to me to pursue the course I have marked out."

After a few moments' reflection the baron shook his head, and said:

"I adhere to my opinion that it is a dangerous experiment. All the fortune of her kinsman ten times told would not suffice to repay you for the mischief the princess might do in the first interval of lucid intellect."

"I will risk it," was the reckless reply. "I have had so many proofs of Gertrude's devotion that I do not believe anything can change her feelings towards me."

"Well, since you are resolved, I will do what is necessary; but I fear that like many other men you are blindly rushing on to destruction in the hope of grasping more than you really need."

At that moment a tap upon the door was heard, and it unclosed to admit the princess, in an elegant and most becoming evening toilet.

Her complexion glowed with the clear rose tint produced by the artificial stimulant from which she was never permitted to be free; but in the eyes that formerly beamed so brightly there was an expression of gentle languor once entirely unknown to them. A smile of tender softness played upon her ruby lips as she advanced, with indolent grace, towards her husband, and laid her hand upon his arm.

"Oh, Ernest, love, I grudge every moment given to others while you are here. You have been away so long—so long, and I wearied for your presence so much that I was miserable. Our good uncle here can tell you how I pined in your absence, and refused to be comforted."

The prince passed his arm caressingly around her form, and looking tenderly into her eyes, unshrinkingly said:

"I would not have it otherwise, my beautiful darling, for I too missed you amid the pleasures that surrounded me while I was away. I can no longer bear to be separated from my Gertrude, and I intend to take you with me to Lichtenfels. What do you say to that, *ma belle*?"

"To Lichtenfels? Yes—now I remember. Once I did think that to reign there over a little court of my own would be grand; but—but, somehow, all that foolish ambition is dead within me, and it seems like a far-off dream that I ever pined for such state. Dear Ernest, if you could only stay here with me I should be far happier than in Lichtenfels; but that is impossible, I suppose?"

She sighed heavily, and raised her hand to her breast as if a weight oppressed it. This was a habit she had fallen into of late years, and, harsh as the baron was, he never heard one of those long, gasping respirations that he did not shiver and change colour.

"Yes—impossible," was the emphatic reply of the prince to his wife's last words. "You can go with me, but I cannot remain here when duty calls me elsewhere."

"Oh, well, with you and my children I can be contented anywhere," was the submissive reply.

The prince bit his lip, and after a moment said:

"Will not my society suffice for your happiness, at least for a season, Gertrude? I would prefer to have the lady here under my uncle's care, and I am sure so true a wife and mother as you are will consent to what will be for their welfare."

With a wild cry, as piteous as the wail of a suffering child, she looked up at him and pleaded:

"Oh, Ernest, if you are my soul these little ones are my life. Don't—don't speak of removing me from them. I cannot bear it, indeed I cannot."

"Then we won't speak of it just now," said the prince, soothingly. "You shall decide yourself as to whether you will accompany me to Lichtenfels, or remain here with the boys. A few weeks hence, when we talk the matter over again you may see it in a different light."

"No—no—I shall never be willing to be separated from my darlings. See—here they come now. Carl is helping his brother over the terrace. It is strange that he is so much more active and thoughtful than Albert. I can't account for it, but then my head isn't good for much. I used to think—I am sure I did; but since that long illness the power to do so seems to have left my brain. Is not my dress beautiful, Ernest? It came from Vienna only this morning."

"And very becoming it is to you, my beautiful. Your *modiste* has exquisite taste."

"I am so glad you like it, for I only care for your admiration. But the boys have new velvet suits, too, embroidered with gold, and they are coming here to show them to you. I left Katrina dressing them, and she has done it well. Come to my heart, Albert; and you, Carl, go to your papa. This is my eldest born, and my best and sweetest darling. He never does anything to vex or annoy his mother; do you, love?"

By this time the children had entered the room through a door that opened on to the terrace, and Albert obeyed his mother by nestling fondly to her breast, but Carl stood with pouting lips and defiant eyes as he sturdily said:

"I won't go to patill you kias me first. You always pet Alby, and turn me off to somebody else. Oh, you're such a pretty mamma to-day that I want my kisses too."

"Ma may kiss you first, Carl; I don't care," said Albert, in a languid tone. "You know I'd give you everything I have if you wanted it."

When this permission was uttered the younger child sprang to his mother's arms, and tenderly enfolding both lads in her embrace, the princess looked down upon them and said:

"I love you both dearly, and my kisses shall be equally shared between you; but Albert is first, little Carl; he is to be your liege lord, as well as your brother; you must understand that, and learn to pay him due respect while you are yet children."

"I know—I know. Katrina says that Alby will be prince, but I shall be ruler. What does she mean,

mamma? Am I to take care of my brother when he is big, as I do now?"

An expression of intense anger and alarm came over the mother's face, and she cried out:

"How dare Kate talk to you in that manner? You will be lord of Guilderstein, but Albert will be Prince of Berchtols, and Elector of Lichtenfels; and as you grow older you will see that there is a vast difference in your position and his. You will be a great nobleman, but he will be something more. Oh! if my ambitious dreams for myself have died out they have found new life in my aspirations for the precious child first given to my maternal arms."

She kissed the smooth brow of Albert with such passionate fondness that jealous little Carl drew himself from her side, and clenching his hands, passionately said:

"You love my brother best—you always loved him best! but I won't care—no, I won't. I'll be pa's boy, for Katrina says he can make me as great a man as you say Alby is going to be."

The lad rushed into his father's extended arms, and a significant look was exchanged between the uncle and nephew, the meaning of which the princess seemed to comprehend, for she tremulously said to her husband:

"You won't encourage the child in such fancies? He must not be taught to envy his brother's birth-right. It is wrong in his nurse to put such thoughts into his head, and I shall severely reprove her for it."

"Nonsense, Gertrude; don't scold Katrina for talking idly to Carl. It really amuses me to hear this little diplomat talk. It is wonderful to me where he gets all his sharp sayings from."

"From the baron, of course," said the mother, resentfully. "He is never weary of teaching Carl clever sayings, but he never takes any pains with your heir; though it is more important to train him into fill his future position than to put impertinent speeches in his brother's mouth."

To this reproach the baron lazily replied:

"I totally disagree with you in that opinion, princess. The fate of Albert is already settled, and fortune has done so much for him that there is small need of his doing anything for himself. But with a younger son it is different, and I naturally feel sympathy for one born in the same rank that was awarded me. Besides, Carl amuses me; he has in him the capabilities of as shrewd a man as is to be found in Germany, and I mean to train him for the high station he will be sure to obtain hereafter. He has the spirit of a ruler, and I believe when nature makes such a man as he will be a realm is always provided for him to rule over."

The princess earnestly regarded him, but her brain, incapable of sustaining any longer tension, suddenly became confused, and raising her hand to her head, she muttered:

"It is always so. When I wish to see things clearly something comes and clouds my mind. There is something that haunts me always—but I can't recall it; my memory is so treacherous. Ernest, love, give me your arm, I feel ill; I must go to my room a little while."

Her husband put down the child, and passing his arm around her form, half bore her from the apartment.

It was always thus with her. She could speak sensibly enough on any subject for a brief season, but the instant the strain became too great her mind seemed to fail her, and she either retired to the seclusion of her own room, or uttered the most incoherent inanities to those around her. She retained sense enough, however, to know that this was the case, and when it was possible to do so she always escaped to solitude till repose had restored to her such mental equilibrium as she could now command.

By the time the princess gained her own apartment her cause of complaint against Katrina had entirely escaped her mind, and when her attendant came forward to receive her, understanding very well what was the matter, she sank into the large cushioned chair the woman wheeled forward, and faintly said:

"Fan me, Katrina, and give me some cold water. I feel faint and weak; though I can't understand why these attacks come over me so often of late."

Katrina shuddered as she looked on the livid face of her mistress, for every shade of colour had died out of her cheeks and lips, and all the light in her eyes seemed suddenly extinguished.

The prince apprehensively asked:

"Is the princess often thus?"

"Yes, your highness; of late very often, and I am becoming seriously alarmed about her."

"I must get the baron to try his skill in restoring her," was his reply, and he hurriedly left the room. Prince Ernest soon returned with a goblet of red wine, in which his uncle had infused some restorative drops. As Katrina received the draught from his hand her own trembled, and she asked, in a faint tone:

"My lord, are you sure this will restore her?"

"Yes—quite sure," and he looked full in her eyes as he spoke. Without farther questioning, Katrina took the goblet, and offered its contents to the lips of her mistress.

The prince looked on while she slowly swallowed it, and then lifting her in his arms, he placed her on the bed, and lingered an instant, as if uncertain about something he wished to say to the nurse. But he finally left the room without speaking, and Katrina sat beside the bed, looking down upon the princess with an expression of compassionate regret. She muttered:

"Oh! if it were to be done over again I would not be their wicked accomplice. But what could I do? If I had refused to become their tool they would have sent me away, and another, less kind to her, would have supplied my place. I should have been separated from Hugel after all he had done to win me."

In the years that had elapsed since we last looked upon Katrina she had developed into a matronly looking woman, with as bright eyes and ruby lips as in the days in which Hugel was tempted to forget his watch by the bribe of a kiss.

For the last six years she had been his wife, and the youngest son of the prince had been her foster-child. Hence her attachment to Carl, and her fond aspirations for his future greatness.

Her only infant had died when it was but a few weeks old, and little Carl had taken his place in her heart. She clearly foresaw the future destiny that must be awarded to the two sons by so ambitious a man as the Prince of Berchtols, and while she pitied the disappointment the hapless mother was destined to feel, Katrina exulted in the career that she believed would result to her own darling by the sacrifice of his brother.

CHAPTER XLIX.

It was early summer when Prince Ernest expressed to his uncle his wishes with reference to his wife; and from that time a daily diminution of the fatal agent employed against her was made, while the baron watched with sedulous care to discover what effect resulted by her freedom from its influence.

To his surprise and gratification the princess seemed slowly to recover the tone of her mind without that fiery impulsiveness of nature, of which he stood in such well-grounded fear, again showing itself.

That summer was passed by her in a dream of happiness; for the husband to whom she continued to cling with fondest love remained at Berchtols the greater portion of the time, devoting himself to her as he had never done before—watching every variation of her health or spirits with a degree of solicitude which she naturally mistook for affection.

The other powers of her mind seemed to react long before memory stirred up the events so mysteriously hidden away in the chambers of her brain.

The baron at length expressed a decided opinion that unless some severe mental shock was given to her, referring directly to what had occurred immediately after her marriage, she would go to her grave without recalling that which it was so important to her husband she should forget.

So the two conspirators congratulated themselves on the apparent apathy of the princess, and imagined themselves safe at the very moment the sleeping demon was slowly awakening to life in the long-paralyzed nature of the injured woman.

Very slowly and gradually did she attain any distinct perception of what had passed before this cloud came over her mind; but past events soon arose before her in the quiet of her own apartment, and with them came the subtle instinct which always rules a mind beginning to warp; this warned her that her memories and her resentments must be concealed if she would escape being again placed under the paralyzing influence which had so long held her in a bondage she felt to be most humiliating and degrading.

Yet she almost regretted the happy dream that was gliding away from her, and recoiled from the conviction that the man she had so loved—the father of her idolized children—was the basest and bitterest adversary she could have to deal with.

By degrees she slowly recalled the past, and by the new light that daily and hourly dawned on her mind read the blighting record. Yet with all the cunning taught by necessity she concealed all she thought and felt beneath the same gentle and smiling exterior she had so long worn.

How her strong passions and bitter resentments seethed beneath the curb she put upon them was never permitted to appear upon the surface; so they surged and boiled beneath this placid exterior with redoubled fury from the efforts used to hold them in subjection.

The mind of the princess had slowly received the shock the baron had pronounced necessary to arouse it into perfect action, in its gradually awakening to the conviction that her son was an idiot.

Had this knowledge come to her at first it must have destroyed her, but it did not, for she struggled against the belief of Albert's imbecility, and most unwillingly did it force itself upon her. With it arose the certainty that the boy's defective mind was due to the long illness from the effects of which she never recovered till after his birth.

She knew now that some fatal and subtle power must have held her beneath its spell during all these years, and she raged beneath the humiliation to which she had been subjected, and vowed to give up even her life to accomplish such a vengeance as would cause her to be quoted as the Nemesis of modern times.

But she must be wary; she must bide her time, and not betray her suspicions while she remained at Berchtols; for there she was entirely in the power of her two ruthless adversaries, and this time her life might become a sacrifice.

So the days and weeks passed on, and with a heart divided between regrets that he had no excuse for ridding himself of his wife, and thankfulness that her nature was so radically changed, Prince Ernest made his preparations for a removal to Lichtenfels, accompanied by his family; for Count Guilderstein had written so pressingly to have the children brought to see him that it was finally decided that their mother's prayers should prevail, and that she should not be separated from her darlings.

The day before the one appointed for their departure from the castle a courier from Lichtenfels arrived, bringing with him the news of the sudden decease of the old Elector, and the exultant heir set out to gain the inheritance to the possession of which so much crime had paved the way.

For years Prince Ernest had been unable to learn anything of the heiress, and he felt assured that when once the reins of authority were in his firm hands they would never be torn from him at the bidding of a feeble girl, backed by such friends as the Lady Irene might be able to win over to her cause.

After a rapid journey the party safely reached Lichtenfels, a town of ten thousand inhabitants, who came in crowds to welcome the gracious prince who had spared no pains to render himself popular with the masses of the people. Vines filled the air and flowers were profusely scattered upon the road he passed over. The respect due to the memory of the late Elector was forgotten in the enthusiastic joy at the accession of the new one, and for a brief season the princess found all her bitter and resentful feelings merged in the reawakened ambition that filled her breast.

The man beside her had wronged her grievously, but he could give her all that her heart had once panted for, and of late he really seemed to be devoted to her. Thus musing, the princess wavered in her lately formed purpose, and when he took her hand and drew particular attention towards her by crying out: "My people, behold your Princess! she will prove a good angel to you and your children"—she felt as if he had almost atoned for his terrible wrongs against herself.

As they drew near the palace an immense stone structure situated in one of the public squares, with linden-trees growing around it, the cries of the populace were hushed, for there lay in state the body of the deceased Elector.

The hatchment over the door and the crape in which the flag was veiled caused Prince Ernest to tremble as he looked upon them, for his greatest weakness was a terror of death, and he nervously shrank from every evidence of mortality.

The state rooms usually occupied by the late Elector were already prepared for the reception of his successor, and the magnificent suite of apartments once appropriated to the Duchess of Lindorf were in readiness for the princess and her children.

In the grand reception room the corpse lay, with consecrated candles turning around the bier, and

priests constantly praying for the soul of the departed. After a hasty visit of ceremony to this apartment the Elector went at once to his cabinet, where the few who had shared with him the cares which of late years had devolved on him, were awaiting his appearance.

He was gratified to find that everything had been conducted in the best manner to secure his interests, and not even a voice was raised to question the reality of the Princess Irene's fate. The programme of future proceedings was soon arranged, and the whole party sat down to a magnificent repast, which was conducted with such decorum as befitted the near vicinity of the dead.

In the meantime, after partaking of some refreshment and arranging a becoming toilet, the Electress received her kinsman the Count of Guilderstein in her own apartments.

The count was a small fair man, with blue eyes and gray hair; he was evidently a hypochondriac and a sufferer from some chronic disease for which there was no remedy. He gazed with delight upon his cousin, and grasping her hand in his own, exclaimed:

"My dear Gertrude, you are even more charming now than in your girlish days. The prince informed me that on account of your failing health it was necessary to keep you at Berchtols, but I can detect no symptom of illness in your appearance. Your complexion is positively dazzling."

This speech produced a painful revulsion of feeling in the mind of the Electress, but she smothered the indignant anger that swelled anew in her heart, and with a smile replied:

"Till very lately I have suffered from a nervous disease, and Prince Ernest was quite right to keep me from the excitement into which I must inevitably plunge now that I am here. But we will not talk of myself now, if you please. I must show you two precious jewels—the darlings of my heart; and I wish to ask your opinion concerning one of them, for I am very uneasy on his account."

"Nothing wrong, I hope; especially with the eldest, for he is the most important personage I assure you."

Her voice slightly trembled as she replied:

"Alas! it is for him that I am most concerned, and I have yearned to see you that I might open my heart to you on this most painful subject. But I will not forestall your judgment; you shall see my children and decide for yourself if my fears are well or ill grounded."

She rang the bell, to which an attendant in waiting responded; to him she said:

"Tell the nurse to bring the young princes hither, their kinsman wishes to see them."

The man bowed low, and after a few moments of rather desultory conversation on the part of the lady, Albert and Carl made their appearance; the former evidently just aroused from sleep, but the latter as sprightly and active as if he had not so lately endured the fatigue of a long journey.

Carl was quite as tall as his brother, and his protecting air as he led the elder by the hand gave his kinsman the idea that he was the heir. Guilderstein held out his hand, and grasping the one the lad readily extended to him, he said:

"I cannot understand you, cousin. This child seems to be a noble fellow, and well worthy of the high destiny to which he was born."

Tears sprang into the mother's eyes, and she put Carl aside, and thrusting the somnolent Albert before her kinsman, bitterly said:

"It is always thus; everyone mistakes Carl for the eldest born. His father would gladly see him in his brother's place, and my poor darling has no friend but me—no, not one—not one—unless you will defend him. Oh, my cousin! look at this child, born to such greatness, and help me to maintain his rights even in opposition to the wish of his own father. Albert is my darling—my darling—and I shall die if he be defrauded of his birthright."

The count regarded her in extreme surprise. He gently said:

"You are becoming excited, cousin. Pray calm yourself, and do not speak of these things before the children. It is not fitting that a jealous feeling should be aroused between them."

The Electress sat down, and seemed to be making a great effort to control herself, but her varying complexion and trembling hands showed how powerful was the curb she put upon her emotions. She laid her hand on Albert's head, and with dry lips muttered:

"Speak to the child; try and elicit some token of intelligence, and then tell me what you think of his condition."

Anxious to afford her time to recover from the evident emotion that convulsed her frame, the count lifted Albert to his knee, and said:

"Well, my little man, what have you to say to your kinsman? Do you know that I am the only relative your mother has, and that she was reared to womanhood under my guardianship? What have you to say to that, my pretty little prince?"

The child fixed his vacant eyes on the speaker, and said:

"Let me get down; I don't know you, and I don't like you—you are ugly. Where is Carl?"

The younger child now took his hand and helped him to the floor as he gravely said:

"Poor Alby is afraid of strangers, cousin, but I am not. I know that you are Count Guilderstein, of Guilderstein, and you have much land and gold to give to my mamma when you die; but she will never give me any, for she loves my brother best, and she means to give him all."

"Never mind if she does, Carl; I will give it back to you," said Albert, grasping his brother's arm and trying to draw him away. "Come—let us go back; I am tired of staying here."

The count regarded the two children earnestly; he scanned the vacant face of the elder, and, with a look of the deepest compassion, turned to the mother and said:

"Alas, Gertrude, is it so? Am I right in my conjecture? Then what else is left to the Elector but to adopt the course you just now hinted at?"

"He never shall do that!" she hissed through her half-shut teeth. "He shall never consummate his own wickedness by depriving his heir of the honours to which he was born. Albert may be a prince *faisant*, as so many of the early kings of France were, but he shall have his own, even if another has to wield power in his name. Oh, you do not know—you do not know what depths of treachery I have sounded—what hideous want of faith has been practised towards me. But I must tell you—yes, I must tell you what will arouse every indignant feeling of your nature."

Her excitement became so great that the count was alarmed. He spoke in a guarded tone.

"My dearest Gertrude, it is very imprudent to speak thus before the children, and the nurse is, I believe, not very far off. Let us dismiss them before you give me the confidence you hint at."

"You are right," she more calmly said, and raising her voice, she commanded the boys to run out to Katrina, and go with her to their own apartment. Making a little bow to his kinsman, Carl took his brother's hand and led him away without looking towards his mother.

Jealous as he was of her greater affection for Albert, the child had so long been taught to consider her of so little importance that he often thought it scarcely worth while to show her the respect due her. Infant as he was, this small courtier had already been trained in the path it was meant that he should walk in, and he showed singular facility in being moulded by those he had been taught would hereafter possess the power to advance his worldly interests.

The door closed on them, and the Electress opened one that led into a smaller room, fitted up as a boudoir. A satin-covered sofa was placed between two windows, opening on a well-kept shrubbery, and on this she motioned the count to seat himself, while she took a place near enough to him to enable him to distinguish her lowest tone. The door through which they had passed was left half open, that the approach of a listener through the outer room might be detected.

After a painful pause the Electress spoke.

"You now understand the awful curse that has been sent upon my husband. You saw that his son is—alas! that I must say it—that Albert is an imbecile—an idiot!"

"Alas! yes, my poor Gertrude. But why is this affliction more of a curse to the Elector than to you, his unfortunate mother?"

With a sudden burst of emotion she cried:

"Listen to me, and you shall hear a tale of hideous wrong that cries aloud to heaven for vengeance. I have been drugged to the point of imbecility myself; I have, for years, been kept in a fool's paradise—yes, for years—and only now have I been permitted to regain my right reason, because it was necessary to remove me, hither. I comprehend that Ernest dared not bring me in contact with you, who knew me so well, without undoing what has been done that he might hold me in the degrading bondage in which I have so long been kept. I have been bound by a spell I could not break, which rendered me the

willing slave of the ruthless man who made himself master of my destiny. The powerful agent used by him prostrated both mind and body so long that my son was born an idiot. Then say, is not the curse his alone? My boy shall yet become a blessing to me, in spite of his lack of mental power, but to him he shall be a living curse if he attempts to carry out the design I have already fathomed. Carl shall never take Albert's place—never! I swear it, and I call on you to assist me to maintain him in his rights."

She spoke with such vehemence that her kinsman could not have interrupted her, even if he had wished to do so; but Count Guilderstein was frightened by the subdued vehemence of her manner, and after a pause to collect himself, he said:

"Are you quite sure of all you assert, Gertrude? If it be true I am at a loss to find a sufficient motive for your husband's conduct."

And he cast a searching glance upon her in the awakening belief that mental more than physical ailment had been the cause of her detention at Berchtols. The Electress detected this suspicion, and she pointedly said:

"I am perfectly sane now, cousin; you need fear no mad outbreak on my part, though I have gone through enough to render me a fit inmate of a lunatic asylum. It will be best for me to commence at the beginning, and tell you all that happened to me since the day on which I left Vienna as the wife of the Prince of Berchtols. I hope that you will listen to me with every disposition to believe that I am not exaggerating in anything I have to reveal."

The count gravely replied:

"I will listen to you with a candid desire to judge fairly between yourself and your husband."

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

NOVEL ADVERTISEMENT.—"Wanted, a boarding-place, where the terms are not moderate, and where none of the 'comforts of a home' are guaranteed, and in a pious family not preferred."

THE DOCTOR OUTWITTED.

Doctor Dodge, an eclectic physician, having been lecturing on the evils of tea and coffee, he happened to meet one morning, at the breakfast-table, a witty son of Erin, of the better class. Conversation turned on the doctor's favourite subject, and he addressed our Irish friend as follows:

"Perhaps you think that I would be unable to convince you of the deleterious effects of tea and coffee?"

"I don't know," said Erin, "but I'd like to be there when you do it."

"Well," said the doctor, "if I convince you that they are injurious to your health will you abstain from their use?"

"Sure and I will, sir."

"How often do you use coffee and tea?" asked the doctor.

"Morning and night, sir."

"Well," said the doctor, "do you ever experience a slight dizziness of the brain on going to bed?"

"I do, indeed, I do," replied Erin.

"And a sharp pain through the temples, in and about the eyes, in the morning?"

"Troth I do, sir."

"Well," said the doctor, with an air of confidence and assurance in his manner, "that is the tea and coffee."

"Is it, indeed? Faith and I always thought it was the whisky I drank."

The company roared with laughter, and the doctor quietly retired.

CHANGING A GUINEA.—An Irish gentleman, who was very much annoyed at the late hours kept by his sons, gave strict orders to John, a faithful old butler, to lock the door every night at eleven o'clock, and not to open it after that time; the young gentlemen were punctual to the hour, but one morning Master Tom wasn't home till one, when, seeing a light in the hall, he tapped gently at the door, and the following dialogue took place between Master Tom and the butler: "Who's there?" "It's I, John—it's I; open the door." "I couldn't, Master Tom—it would be as much as my place is worth." "Oh, you must let me in, John!" "I couldn't indeed, Master Tom; but have you a guinea in your pocket, Master Tom?" "I have, John—I have!" "Put it in the keyhole, Master Tom, and I think it will open the door." Master Tom did as he was told, and the door instantly opened. "Thank you, John—thank you, John! There's a good fellow! and now here's a half-a-crown for you, and just run round to the stable with my horse." "Yes, Master Tom." And upon

John's return he found the door shut, and tapped for admission, when Master Tom played the butler's part over again, and told him there was an alteration in the lock, but if he'd put a guinea and a half-crown in it would open it. That was good tit for tat.

SPICED VINEGAR.

Here is a story told by one who saw the parties at the table:

Last summer a youth, who stood five feet eleven and three-quarter in his stockings, was invited by a friend to dine at the same house where I was boarding. This was his first visit away from home, and he told his friend, as they took their seats at the table, that he expected he would show him all the sights in London, as he wanted to let all the folks at "hum" know about it. The servant brought a plate of soup; and observing a gentleman nearly opposite put considerable catsup in his dish, our friend pointed to a bottle of pepper-sauce, and asked his neighbour what it was.

"Spiced vinegar," was the reply.

"Oblige a feller by handin' it along."

"Certainly," was the answer.

Our friend took the bottle, and commenced dosing his soup; but as the sauce did not flow very freely he took out the cork.

He poured nearly a wineglassful into his soup; and taking his spoon, he dipped it full, together with several peppers, and put it into his mouth. The next instant he spouted the contents of his spoon across the table into a French gentleman's bosom, and bawled out:

"Water! Water! Give me some water! I'm all afire!"

"By gar, sair!" exclaimed the Frenchman, in a rage, jumping up from the table, "you have spoiled my shirt, my vest, sair. Spoil everything, sair! By gar, I shall see about this, sair!"

In the meantime our friend had seized a pitcher, containing water, and taken a tremendous draught. Setting down the pitcher, he eyed the Frenchman for a moment, and then yelled:

"Confound yer old shirt! 'Spose I was goin' to burn my in'ards out for you or yer shirt? I'll give you one of mine."

It was with much difficulty the host could allay the Frenchman's rage, and set matters all straight again. But ever after "spiced vinegar" was a by-word, and sufficient to set a whole table in a roar.

NOTHING LIKE OIL.—A rich petroleum worker, gaudy as a skeleton and ignorant as a hodman, went to an artist to have his portrait taken. "Will you have it taken in oil or water colours?" inquired the artist. "Oil, of course," replied he: "it comes to me more natural; and, besides, it makes me look somewhat fatter."

A VALUABLE SERVANT FOR CARRYING OUT ORDERS.

Old Mr. Wiggins: "Why, Biddy, what are you doing with my watch?"

Biddy: "Faith, yer tould me to boil the egg by it for three minutes, and there they are side by side, to be sure."

ADVICE TO YOUNG LADIES.—The man who does not take tea, ill-treats the cat, and stands with his back to the fire, is a brute whom we would advise you not to marry on any consideration, either for love or money, but decidedly not for love. But the man who, when tea is over, is discovered to have had none, is very sure to make the best husband. Patience like his deserves being rewarded with the best of wives, and the best of mothers-in-law. My dears, when you meet with such a man do your best to marry him.

AN AWFUL COMPARISON.

Sir William Brown, a pompous sort of a man, being at a parish meeting, made some proposals which were objected to by a farmer. Highly enraged, he said to the farmer:

"Sir, do you know that I have been to two universities?"

"Well, sir," said the farmer, "what of that? I had a calf that sucked two cows, and the observation I made was the more he sucked the greater calf he grew."

Sir William never heard the last of that.

"I WISH you to be present, my dear, when the dentist comes," said Laura to her lord. "I desire that no one but you shall see my defects." "I cannot gratify you, love," he said; "I cannot see any defects in one so perfect." That evening the dinner was remarkably well-cooked!

LOCAL NEWS.—People read articles of local interest for reasons, as opposite as man and wife. A reads about a fight because he was there and saw it; B, because he wasn't there and didn't; C, because he'd heard about it, and D, because he hadn't; while those who had a hand in it want to know how much truth concerning them the editor has deemed con-

patible in its utterance with a continuation of his own earthly career. The consciousness, too, that hundreds of others are perusing the same article simultaneously, and that it is therefore a subject of common thought and conversation doubtless adds to the zest with which ordinary readers eagerly devour articles that otherwise would have been a dull perusal or no perusal at all.

"SOME KNOWLEDGE OF THE WATER."

A man applied once to be shipped before the mast. "Are you an able seaman or a green hand?" asked the shipping master.

"Why, not a very able seaman, but yet not exactly a green hand. I have some knowledge of the water."

"Ever been a voyage?"

"No."

"Well, what then do you know about the sea?"

"Why, I have tended a saw mill!"

THE CURE OF "CONVALESCENT."—Old Dr. A—was a quack, and a very ignorant one. On one occasion he was called by mistake to attend a council of physicians in a critical case. After considerable discussion, the opinion was expressed by one that the patient was convalescent. When it came Doctor A—'s turn to speak, "Convalescent?" said he; "why, that's nothing serious; I have cured convalescent in twenty-four hours!"

"WAS NOT THAT A PRETTY DISH?"

First Gentleman: "What ye going to have for dinner?"

Second Ditto: "Pigeon pie!"

First Ditto: "Why, I thought you'd sold yer birds."

Second Ditto: "So I did; but when I took 'em to the chap I 'appened to loose a tile in his left. Birds come 'ome. Chap come next day, but a-course I 'adn't seen 'em—and that 'ow I got the pigeon pie!"—*Fun.*

PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.—It is no use placing a roast leg of mutton before a man who can't help it.—*Punch.*

ANSWERS FOR OUR ARTIST.

"Biddy Malony, just look at that clock! Didn't I tell you last night to knock at my door at eight this morning?"

"An' so ye did, sir, and I came to the door at eight, sure enough, but I heard ye was making no noise at all!"

"Well, why the dickens didn't you knock and wake me?"

"Sure, and because I feared yez might be fast asleep!"—*Punch.*

ABYSSINIAN REFLECTION.—Why is it improbable that King Theodore, of Abyssinia, will ever reverence the majesty of English law? Because an English *Beke* was brought before him, instead of the case being *vice versa*.—*Punch.*

RATIOCINATION.

'Spectable Mechanic ("as usual" on Saturday afternoon): "Pent'h 'nails!"

Chemist and Druggist (indignantly): "Nails, sir! Get along with you out o' my shop! I haven't got any nails."

Mechanic: "Ain't got 'ny nails!" (Ponders.) "Wha' d' yer serash y'r 'ead w' then, gov'n'r?"—*Punch.*

STATISTICS.

PUBLIC INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.—The gross public income of the United Kingdom in the year ending the 30th September last was £68,460,142. 5s. 3d. The total ordinary expenditure was £2,353,090. 17s. 10d. less; but as £400,000. were spent for fortifications, the excess of income over expenditure during the year is reduced to £1,853,090. 17s. 10d. The balance in the Exchequer on the 30th September last amounted to £2,790,582. 19s. 2d.

GAME.—The number of licences granted to kill game appears to be largely increasing. Thus in 1856-7 the total number of licences granted in England and authorizing persons to kill game was 28,950; in 1857-8, 31,160; in 1858-9, 33,589; in 1859-60, 35,283; in 1860-1, 34,441; in 1861-2, 37,906; in 1862-3, 34,792; in 1863-4, 36,570; in 1864-5, 39,354; and in 1865-6, 43,231. The number of licences granted to gamekeepers in the same period of ten years was:—1856-7, 1,575; 1857-8, 1,645; 1858-9, 1,677; 1859-60, 1,727; 1860-1, 2,536; 1861-2, 2,725; 1862-3, 2,719; 1863-4, 2,865; 1864-5, 3,043; and 1865-6, 3,217. The number of licences granted in England and authorizing persons to deal in game was:—In 1856-7, 1,103; in 1857-8, 1,199; in 1858-9, 1,240; in 1859-60, 1,325; in 1860-1, 1,368; in 1861-2, 1,407; in 1862-3, 1,422; in 1863-4, 1,550; in 1864-5, 1,702; and in 1865-6, 1,898. We might produce sta-

tistics showing the same results with regard to Scotland. In Ireland the number of licences authorizing persons to kill game has been only slightly augmented, but a large increase must be noted in the number of other game licences issued. Thus, while only 167 gamekeepers' licences were disposed of in Ireland in 1856-7, the number had risen in 1865-6 to 368. In Scotland, again, the number of gamekeepers' licences issued was 873 in 1856-7, and 1,129 in 1865-6. Upon the whole, the conclusion which is forced upon us is that last year game was more highly preserved, more shot, and more sold than ever.

UNFORGIVEN.

OVER the river he rows by night:

What is it he sees on the farther shore?

No glimmering lamp ever lends him light,

And never he goes when the stars are bright,

And the moon never shows him o'er.

No, he never goes when the stars are bright,

And the moon never shows him o'er;

But he rows when the river is foaming white,

And the sharp blue lightnings blind the sight,

And the winds and the thunders roar.

There's a lowly grave on the farther side,

Where a once fair maiden lies.

In the purple glow of her youthful pride,

In her life's fresh bloom she pined and died,

As a blighted rosebud dies.

In her life's fresh bloom she pined and died,

As a blighted rosebud dies;

And there, at night, she is seen to glide,

Clad all in white, and across the tide

She gazes with wistful eyes.

Weary and pale, when the morning beams,

And the winds have ceased to rave,

He rows o'er the river again, and seems

Like one who has waked out of dismal dreams,

Or arisen from the grave.

Like one who has waked out of dismal dreams,

Or arisen from the grave,

He, ghost-like, comes, and his wild eye gleams,

And a briny flood down his thin cheek streams,

As he floats o'er the sun-lit wave.

W. L. S.

GEMS.

THOSE are usually most proud of riches and grandeur who were not born to either.

PERSONS who practise deceit and artifice always deceive themselves more than they deceive others.

THE sun has some spots on its surface, and the best and brightest characters are not without their faults and frailties.

CROSS PURPOSES.—Cross purposes are barriers to all social intercourse—the fell destroyers of domestic peace. If, therefore, thou wouldst live in the world's esteem, disgorge thy evil propensities, and make room for the virtues and glorious attributes of human life, and the glory of heaven.

THE TEST OF YEARS.

Place not thy faith on rose or lily fair,

For they are changelings, even tho' most sweet;

The ivy and the holly are more true—

They bear the test of many lengthened years,

And hold their beauty when sweet flowers decay.

So shall the fame of all thy good deeds shine,

Although thy form shall perish in the tomb.

GENTLE ACCENTS.—Soft and gentle accents enhance, cheer, and brighten the energies of the sinking heart, and sweeten the cup whence the pleasures of life are quaffed. But he who speaks with an evil and malicious tongue dashes a gall-like bitter into the cup of life, and destroys the draught of human pleasures.

ENORMOUS COD FISH.—An enormous cod fish, weighing 48 lb., and measuring 4 ft. 4 in., was recently exposed for sale in New Bond Street. A still larger cod fish, and said to have weighed upwards of 68 lb., has since been brought on shore at Great Grimsby.

FALL OF THE HOE PILLAR AT WOKING.—This old beacon has fallen into a complete ruin during a recent gale. The traveller by the South-Western Railway, when passing the Dramatic College, may have noticed a slender shaft, octagonal in form, rising to the height of 60 ft. or upwards, amid the group of elms by which it was surrounded. This was the Hoe Pillar, of Woking. Within memory it was surrounded by a wooden cupola open on all sides, which served as a Belvedere by day and a lantern by

night. This being neglected by its owner, the Earl of Onslow, was blown off some fifteen years since, and then the work of destruction began, which weather and the subsoil plough have since completed. The Hoe Tower, or tower on the height, as the Saxon name denotes, was built to light benighted wayfarers across the trackless heath, or to show the way to the royal hunting parties overtaken by darkness. Though of no great altitude it could throw its light into Middlesex, Hampshire and Berkshire. Some years after the death of the Duchess of Cleveland, which did not occur till 1707, the property passed into the family of the present owner. The tower, like that of Pisa, had long inclined on one side, but without any other signs of decay, and would have stood two centuries more had a few pounds been bestowed on its repair. Nothing now remains but the fuel chamber at the base, and a few old elm-trees near the spot.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

COLLIQUATIVE SWEATING.—M. Vignard, of Nantes, recommends the following decoction of sage as a remedy for profuse sweating. Take of chopped sage leaves a large pinch; of water six fluid ounces. Boil the sage for a minute or two in the water; let it stand to cool, then filter and sweeten to taste. The perspiration ceased whenever the decoction was taken, but reappeared when it was omitted. M. Vignard suggests the use of this remedy in the colliquative sweating of phthisis.

NEW USE FOR PARAFFIN.—Dr. Stenhouse, who is well known for his applications of chemistry to practical uses, has recently discovered an additional use for paraffin—namely, that it renders leather waterproof. The leather, being coated several times with paraffin and oil, is exposed to heat after each coating, by which rapid absorption takes place. Like gutta-percha soles, paraffined-leather soles give out a wooden sound when struck; and boots and shoes made of paraffined-leather last as long again, it is said, as those made of ordinary leather.

CARE FOR THE FEET.—Many are careless in the keeping of the feet. If they wash them once a week they think they are doing well. They do not consider that the largest pores of the system are located in the bottom of the foot, and that the most offensive matter is discharged through the pores. They wear stockings from the beginning to the end of the week without change. Ill health is generated by such treatment of the feet. The pores are not only repellants, but absorbents, and this foetid matter, to a greater or less extent, is taken back into the system. The feet should be washed every day with pure water only. Stockings should not be worn more than a day or two at a time. They may be worn for one day, and then aired and sunned and worn another day if necessary.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE increase in the army estimates for the current year is set down at 293,000*l.* over that of last session. In the navy estimates the increase is 491,518*l.*

VALENTINES.—The estimated number of valentines dispatched from or delivered in London this year was close upon two millions, yielding an amount of postage considerably above 10,000*l.*

CURIOSITIES IN ATTIRE.—Bonnets made from the skin of the cobra di capello, and ladies' muffs made of vulture-down, are among the articles sent from the Cape of Good Hope to the Paris Exhibition.

MME. GUERINEAU, sister of the celebrated traveller Lalande, has handed to the president of the Society of Acclimatization a sum of 160*l.* to found a prize in memory of her brother, the same to be awarded to the traveller who by his discoveries shall have done most towards improving the food of the human race.

IRISH RAILWAYS.—The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in reply to a deputation which waited upon him to urge that the Irish railways should, if possible, be purchased by the State, declared that the Irish executive were all in favour of the purchase of the railways by the State, and that he should give his best support to such a project.

DEATH OF THE OLDEST VOLUNTEER IN ENGLAND.—Mr. C. T. Tower, of Weald Hall, near Brentwood, died recently. The deceased gentleman, who had reached the venerable age of 92, was the oldest magistrate in Essex, having been for upwards of sixty years in the commission of the peace. He was also the oldest volunteer in England. He served in one of the regiments raised in the reign of George III. He represented Harwich in Parliament some thirty years since.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. M. STREET.—The address of the noble lord you name is "Knebworth, Herts."

A. W. T., nineteen, 5 ft. light brown hair, moustache, gray eyes, and good tempered; money no object.

T. W. B., 5 ft. 8 in., fair, passably good looking, well connected, and a moderate income.

F. S. P.—The story of "Self-Made; or, Out of the Depths," commenced in No. 27 of THE 7 DAYS' JOURNAL, which is out of print.

MILLER, nineteen, tall, dark, and will have a small fortune when of age. Respondent must be dark, with curly hair and moustache.

JANE.—To make stone blue take finely powdered indigo and starch, make into a paste with warm water, and then form the mass into small lumps or cakes.

CARENE SHALE, dark complexion, dark hair, blue eyes, is rather short, and has a little money. Respondent must be tall, and from twenty to thirty.

FRANK B. A., twenty-one, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, passable looking, has a profession, and a little money, wishes to correspond with a young lady about eighteen or twenty.

BINDER, who thinks sailors the best and bravest of men, would like one for a husband. She is eighteen, dark, and the daughter of a tradesman.

BALFE.—The oldest wooden coffin of which we have any record is that of King Arthur, stone coffins were used by the Anglo-Saxons as early as the year 695, and were not quite obsolete before the reign of Henry VIII.

LOTTY B. would like to correspond with a respectable young man, a mechanic, and a member of the Church of England. "Lotty" is twenty-two, tall, fair, domesticated, and fond of home.

W. M. J.—1. For your purpose you cannot do better than procure Lindley Murray's Grammar. The abridged editions are very cheap. 2. "Chambers's Educational Course" embraces works upon every branch of learning.

F. A. C., twenty-five, 5 ft. 10 in., rather dark, good looking, fond of music, in a business bringing in 2500. per annum, and in possession of property left by a deceased uncle bringing 1500. per annum. Respondent must be about twenty-three.

SOPHIA.—Despondency is the worst of all evils; it is the abandonment of good; the giving up the battle of life for a meaningless existence. He who can infuse courage into the mind is the best physician.

FANNY.—The sting of a wasp may be remedied by pressing the barrel of a watch-key over the spot, so as to expose the sting, which must be removed; then apply a little hartshorn, which will give immediate relief.

J. B. wishes to correspond with a good looking, fair young lady, about eighteen or twenty, respectable, and ladylike. "J. B." is twenty-three, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, dark hair and whiskers, earning good salary, and just returned from abroad.

ALICE MAUDE, eighteen, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, golden curling hair, laughing dark blue eyes, transparent complexion, considered beautiful, affectionate and cheerful disposition, very accomplished in music and singing, and has a large fortune. Respondent must be tall and handsome; fortune no object.

JOSEPHINE C. W., nineteen, medium height, light golden hair, hazel eyes, not over good looking, but passable, and good tempered; no money, nor does she care about respondent having any. "J. C. W." would like the latter to be dark, of medium height, not over twenty-two, and a tradesman; *cortes* exchanged.

A POOR TIRED WOMAN.—You wish to know the quantity of water required to add to the washing-powder recipe which appeared in No. 185 of THE LONDON READER. Prepare it as directed, put the linen into water the night before, rinse them, rub them over with soap, add some of the washing-powder with sufficient water to cover them.

CLAUDE.—Oxyuriatic acid will perfectly remove stains of ink, oil, and grease from books; nearly all acids will take out spots of ink from paper; but it is important to use such as do not affect its texture. Spirits of salt, diluted with water, may be applied successfully, and after a few minutes wash it off with clean water.

JULIA.—You wish to know in what consists strength of character. Two things: power of will, and power of self-restraint; therefore for its existence strong feelings and great command over them must be exercised. A great mistake is often made in this way; a man who bears all before him, as those frown domestics tremble and children quake, and because he has his will obeyed, and has his own way in everything, obtains the name of a strong character; but the truth is he is the weak man; it is only his passions that are strong; *composure* is very often the highest result of strength.

CONFIDENCE.—The best prayers we can offer up to the Throne above are not those uttered by eloquent lips from the crimson and purple cushions of a popular pulpit, but the prayers that fill the earth and flutter through the vastness of heaven, the prayers that escape from the smothered sobs of a broken heart, and are told by the glistering tear-drops as they steal the bloom from the fading cheek; the prayers

that are unceasingly escaping from the heart of the weeping mother for her child, or those of the maiden for a loved one far away upon the battle-ground; our earth is purified and refined by this secret yet mighty influence of silent prayer.

A GIRL GIRL.—At sixteen you are not too young to go on the stage. To obtain, however, an engagement you should first place yourself under the tuition of dramatic, musical, and dancing masters, and then apply to the manager of a theatre, with testimonials as to your general abilities, who would probably in the first instance give you a trial.

EMMA S. and ELLEN G. "Emma," eighteen, medium height, fair complexion, golden hair, blue eyes, loving and amiable. "Ellen G." twenty, 5 ft. 7 in., a brunette, a kind and loving heart, and a small fortune and great expectations. Respondents must be tall, dark, and about twenty. Fortune no object.

LOREL WORDSWORTH, thirty, 5 ft. 1 in. in height, very gentlemanly, black moustache, no whiskers, very dark, stoutly built, has a large estate in Shropshire, and also an income of 8000. a year. The lady answering must be tall, dark, good looking, well connected, a good temper, and of first-class education, but need not have any money. "L. W." will have also on the death of his grandfather another 5,000.

LAURA S. and RACHAEL S. wish to correspond with two gentlemen. "Laura" is twenty-one, auburn hair, blue eyes, and of medium height. "Rachael" is twenty, dark brown hair, gray eyes, and of medium height; both of cheerful dispositions and good tempered. The respondents must be dark and rather tall.

ADVICE.

Attend, ye fair, while I impart

The secret how to please;

The rudiments of beauty's art

Are short, and only these:

All flattery learn betimes to shun,

For once that Siren hear;

Know praise for virtue not your own

Is satire most severe.

'Tis not in gold, bright, sparkling stones,

Or brighter, sparkling eyes,

The value of the life is known,

For these the good despise.

What tho' the spring Elysian glow

On either cheek were seen,

Or whither the virgin snow

Your neck's pellucid skin;

Yet pride or affectation these

Will more than a face deform;

And envy, worse than pale disease,

Shall wither every charm.

True wit exists but with good nature,

The parent of politeness;

Let that illumine every feature,

And lend the eye its brightness.

Virtue is grace and dignity,

'Tis more than royal blood—

A gem the world's too poor to buy—

Would you be fair, be good.

E. H. C.

ORIANA and AURORA. "Oriana," twenty, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, not pretty, but has a loving heart, and is thoroughly domesticated. "Aurora," fifteen, 5 ft. in height, a brunette, a loving disposition, and would like a two years' courtship. Respondents must be about seventeen or eighteen, tall, dark, and affectionate; mechanics preferred. Neither has any money.

PAULINE.—1. The actor you name has been married. 2. He has a son. 3. He is a Frenchman by birth; we cannot, however, pretend to know anything of his wife, his religion, or his age; we should think him to be about forty. 4. Of the other gentleman you name we know nothing. He has not, as far as we are aware, at present earned the honours of a biography.

LIZZIE FORD.—When wedding-rings were first used it is not easy to ascertain. Even now it is no longer an essential part of the marriage ceremony; the Act of Parliament passed in 1837 instituted marriage to be a civil contract, but though it rendered the use of the ring no longer absolutely necessary, it made no express mention of it, and therefore did not forbid it. It is generally looked upon as the right of a woman, and has been hallowed too long by custom to fall into disuse. The notion of some married women that it is wrong to take off their wedding-ring at any time arises probably from the words in the marriage service "till death us do part," the golden circlet being the token and pledge of matrimony, or it may have originated from the Roman Catholic system of hallowing the ring. There is an old proverb:

As your wedding-ring wears

Your cares will wear away.

ALBERT.—The word *paratonnerre* seems to puzzle you; it is derived from the Greek *para* (contrary to), hence the French word *parer* (to ward off), and *tonnerre* (thunder). The word is generally applied to metallic rods used as lightning conductors; these are fixed against the walls of a house, to the spire of a church, or to the mast of a ship, to preserve them from lightning.

EMILY.—You complain that most of the treatises published on pianoforte playing are written in language intelligible only to musicians, and therefore wish to know how to acquire an easier knowledge of the different musical notes or keys? Be not mistaken; there is nothing unintelligible in a good pianoforte treatise to one who has mastered the rudiments of music. After that take lessons from an experienced player.

LOREL F. desires a partner for life. He is twenty-four, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, fair, good looking, whiskers and moustache, in a good business, and a total abstainer. Respondent must be fair, good looking, an amiable disposition, and not over twenty-two. (To remove words from the hands use the juice of a little plant to be found in almost every garden called milk-wort. *Cuscuta* is sometimes used, but milk-wort seldom fails to effect a cure.)

JOSEPHINE.—Agreeable sensations and emotions may be divided thus: Those of pleasure, which refer to the senses; those of harmony, which refer to the mind; and those of happiness, which are the natural result of a union between

harmony and pleasure, the former being exercised in virtue, the latter in temperance. Harmony is principally enjoyed by those who possess taste, for taste exalts the affections and purifies the passions; taste sows flowers in the paths of literature and science, and also alleviates the hour of sorrow by inducing that secret sense of cheerfulness which—

"Refines the soft, and swells the strong,

And joining Nature's general song,

Through many a varying tone unfolds

The harmony of human souls.

RICHARD M.—The first English regatta took place on the 24th of June, 1778, when the banks of the Thames, from Westminster to London Bridge, were crowded with multitudes of spectators anxious to behold the *des* novel aquatic contest. Until that time this sport was practised only in Venice, but such was the popularity gained by it in England that ere the close of the century the regatta obtained a permanent place amongst our national pastimes.

NO NAME.—The engaged finger is the same on the right hand as the wedding finger is on the left; as to the kind of ring, that depends chiefly upon the taste of the gentleman who presents it to the lady; but it certainly must not be a plain gold one. We would suggest one with a stone and the words "love and truth" engraved on it. (Handwriting requires great improvement.)

UNHAPPY WIFE.—Your case is certainly very hard, but you cannot obtain a divorce on the grounds you state; and as you left him with your own accord, he could compel you to return, neither is he, under the circumstances, obliged to allow you anything. All you can do is to remain quiet and trust to his generosity, if he have any; if not, try to do the best you can with your own little property, and if he do not trouble you, do not trouble him.

VALENTINE.—1. We cannot give you a recipe to keep the ear *hot*. Why desire it? Flax ears are regarded as a disfigurement. 2. To make the hands white use warm water and oatmeal or glycerine soap; when the hands are dried rub good violet powder into the skin. 3. How can you expect us to judge of your poetry without reading it? If you will submit the verses to us we will give you our best judgment. 4. Handwriting tolerably good. 5. "Reginald's Fortune" commenced in No. 184, Vol. VIII, of THE LONDON READER.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

BLACKTHORN and WHITTAKER are responded to by—"Alice" and "Queen of Hearts," who would like to correspond with them.

H. B. by—"Annie," who wishes to exchange *cortes*. She is fair, with dark brown hair, highly respectable, loving, and would make a good and domesticated wife.

M. W. by—"L. B.," eighteen, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, good looking, and very respectable.

CHARLES and ALFRED by—"Flora" and "Violet," who think "Charles" and "Alfred" would suit them.

JOHN by—"Lonia," who thinks he is all that she would require for a husband.

R. V. by—"Bella H.," a domesticated person, twenty-five, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, good tempered, with a very affectionate heart, and is quite sure she would make home happy; and—"E. E. H.," who thinks she would like to write to him.

"E. E. H." is twenty-two, medium height, rather dark, good tempered, very industrious, very respectable, and thinks she would make a good, loving wife.

F. W. B. by—"Evy," who has dark hair and eyes, fair complexion, and of good family—"T. L. R.," thirty, tall, dark hair and eyes, no accomplishments, but can cook a dinner and wash a shirt, no money, and would have no objection to assist in a business; and—"Nina," twenty-one, about the medium height, hazel eyes, brown wavy hair, and of a loving disposition.

HAPPY JACK by—"Rosalie M.," who would be content with a tree-heated partner without money. "Rosalie" is twenty-five, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, fair, hazel eyes, curling auburn hair, good colour, very prepossessing, domesticated, merry, affectionate, very fond of children, home, and music, and thinks that she could make "Happy Jack" or "Excelsior" a good, loving wife—"Sancy Kate," twenty-one, curly auburn hair, hazel eyes, medium height, good looking, passionately fond of music and singing, and thinks she would make "Happy Jack" a good, kind, and loving wife; and—"Florence Harcourt," twenty-one, tall, dark, handsome, no fortune, but accomplished, and a good singer and dancer.

MRS. CROFT by—"L. O. E.," twenty-four, tall, dark, good looking, well educated, musical, and a professional man, with a fair and improving income—"Yorkshire B.," nearly twenty-three, tall, fair, good linguist, in receipt of a good salary, attached to a respectable solicitor, can draw, sing, and paint, is very fond of home, and considered handsome by his friends. If this description suits "Minnie Clyde" he will be most happy to send her his *carte de visite* in exchange for hers—"B. J. W.," not quite twenty-two, but looks younger, 5 ft. 7 in., and thinks "Minnie" would make him a wife that he could worship—"J. B. B.," rather tall and handsome, with a nice income, and large expectations from his family, at present an assistant to an analytical chemist, and thinks he would suit her—"E. J. O. B.," tall, dark blue eyes, light hair, a civil engineer by profession, and in receipt of a good income—"Byron," twenty-four, 6 ft. dark blue eyes, good looking, and a medical student; and—"A. F.," a person of family and respectability.

ETHEL by—"F. A. H.," twenty-three, 5 ft. 9 in., dark, and a grocer in a large way of business.

S. J. K. by—"W. D. P. D.," nineteen, 5 ft. 2 in., brown hair, blue eyes, and a fancy cabinet maker, but with nothing to offer but a willing hand and a loving heart.

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